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MY NORTHCLIFFE DIARY

THE DAILY MAIL

My dear Tom Clarke,
Fire

Tom Clarke, Esq

29th Nov. 1920.

A LETTER FROM NORTHCLIFFE TO THE AUTHOR

MY
NORTHCLIFFE
DIARY

by
TOM CLARKE

Editor
of the *News Chronicle*

LONDON
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LIMITED
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1931

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THE VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE

(ALFRED CHARLES WILLIAM HARMSWORTH)

BORN CHAPELIZOD, NEAR DUBLIN,

15 JULY 1865

DIED LONDON, 14 AUGUST 1922

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TO THE READER

AN explanation of the scope of this work is needed. The influence of Lord Northcliffe on newspapers and journalism has been so far-reaching that some record of his methods and achievements is due to his memory. This book is such a record, prepared from a diary of my twelve years' association with him, including that part of his meteoric life when, I think, he was at the summit of his genius. It is not a biography, not a "life" of Northcliffe. I am not competent to write that.

It is fragmentary, as most diaries must be, and here and there, to overcome this defect and provide a better link between events, I have abandoned the diary form.

Northcliffe has remained a man of mystery. This book deals chiefly with his work during and after the Great War. It is not claimed to be a complete record. Intimate as I may have been with his activities in news, there were many points of his life that I did not touch. What you see in the following pages is mostly Northcliffe as a working journalist in the eyes of another working journalist. In consequence, there is a lot of *me*; but only in relation to me can I pretend to try to interpret,

as I have often been asked to, this remarkable man who now belongs to History.

Whether Northcliffe was a power for good or otherwise is a matter of opinion ; his genius as a marshaller of news and reader of the public mind is a matter of fact. References appear, of course, to many other matters besides his newspaper craftsmanship. Together with the sidelights on his way of dealing with men and affairs, they may help to solve the riddle of his dominating, mysterious, fascinating personality.

I have enjoyed compiling this work in the few leisure hours that come to a working journalist as much as I on the whole enjoyed my twelve years' work for the genius who inspired it. I crave indulgence for any defects either in style or in balance of presentation ; and if there are indiscretions which in some minds call for apology, I would say that in any record of a big world figure like Northcliffe it is difficult to be honest and avoid them. Again, I feel my diary extracts are often in the flamboyant, intimate, emotional language of younger days that I would not now employ ; but in general I have not altered it—again in the interests of presenting an honest picture as it appeared to me at the time. In a somewhat varied and travelled life, Northcliffe has been my biggest thrill. I make no secret of my hope that this book will do some service to his memory, and also to the great profession of journalism, of which he was a supreme master. I always had the ambition

TO THE READER

to be a good reporter ; I hope I have succeeded in this book. In that hope I dedicate it to all reporters, and especially to those who shared my affection for "The Chief."

TOM CLARKE.

Aldwick, Sussex,
January, 1931.

Postscript (on reading the proofs) :—

I must not forget my indebtedness to my good friends: Robert Lynd, for his encouragement with wisdom about this book ; A. J. Cummings, J. L. Hodson and L. J. Moore for many helpful suggestions ; and Victor Gollancz, my publisher, for his vigorous patience. He has tacked a label to my name which makes it expedient for me to state that this work has no political significance whatever. I have prepared it entirely as a journalist—a reporter.

T. C.

CHAPTER I

NORTHCLIFFE

Working for Northcliffe, one got four compelling impressions.

1. His ambition for power through his newspapers, though not necessarily for money ;

2. His "Britishness," which did not prevent his working always for closer amity between the English-speaking peoples ;

3. His volcanic intolerance of slipshod work of any sort, whether in his own businesses or elsewhere ;

4. His uncanny instinct, which he called his "sixth sense."

He liked fact before argument. He had little concern with the abstract. He was not a thinker, but, as E. T. Raymond has said, he arrived at the results of thought without thought itself. His outlook was mainly emotional. He said he knew nothing about politics, art, sport, finance, literature, and so on ; and when he looked at a picture, or at a game, or a movement in the City, it was not knowledge, but the emotional response in himself, that dictated his attitude. This caused him to be more interested in people than things. It made him the master of popular journalism, for he

was a realist who knew the things that lie nearest the human heart.

I doubt if he ever understood the point of view of (for example) the politician, or the scholar, although he liked to use these people—to exploit them for the service of the god of News. That he was aware of this lack of understanding is revealed to some extent in his lament to me that he did not go to Oxford. Yet I wonder if Northcliffe would have been the terrific elemental force he was had he acquired the passionless poise and diffusion of thought over many subjects that go with academics. For dynamic beings like Northcliffe the drawbacks of University life are its liberality to all forms of thought ; its inhibitions of ruthless and exclusive concentration on one's own ambitious idea. In Northcliffe's case this was News and the Probing of the Public Mind. I doubt if he could have tolerated Oxford for six months. Had he gone there, and stayed to accept its influence, he would have become more conventional and restrained, more an agent of smug respectability in thought and action, less ruthless of other people's opinions and weaknesses. His moral sense would have developed on lines that would have meant revolt against the dictatorship of his own ideas. He would not then have been the Northcliffe we knew. Had Oxford won Northcliffe, the world might have lost him.

Like all elemental forces, he was simple and unaffected, and even in moments when others sneered at

what they believed to be his ridiculous vanities he did not appear to those who knew him either vain or ridiculous. His Napoleonic gestures are a case in point. They were not the ordinary vanities. They were a part of him without his being conscious of the fact. When he sent me to see Napoleon's hat at Fontainebleau, and said in all seriousness: "I have had it on; it fits me," there was something that prevented one thinking him ridiculous. No ordinary man could have said that and not have known that he was making himself ridiculous.

A boy will do things like that and wonder why people laugh at him; and, after all, I cannot help thinking of Northcliffe as a boy—for all time a boy. He loved the company of young people. He had the audacity, the impatience, the impetuosity, the follies and tricks, the mischief, even the thoughtless cruelties, of a boy. He had a boy's passion for having things explained. He had a boy's interest in the new things of his day like motoring and flying—an interest which, combined with great vision, did more for the development of the car and the aeroplane than has yet been realised. News about sharks, cannibals, wolves, birds, snakes, always excited his keen interest. Once he altered at a late hour the whole leader-page make-up (he supervised personally the selection of the articles on that page) to get in a review of a book about adventures in New Guinea, which he headed "A Boys' Book for Men." Maybe it

was the boy in him that made so strong an appeal to women—the stirring of their maternal instincts.

His fierce energy led him to make mistakes. Sometimes he turned them to advantage. Very seldom was he “caught out.” He was too shrewd for that. If you said a thing often enough, he would say, it became right or true. I do not think his power brought him happiness. I do not think Northcliffe thought he was the success others thought. Sometimes I fancied, when he talked to me in his later days, that he was confessing his failure to find what he sought in life ; that he was robbed of the happiness of power, if there be happiness in it, because it could not be won except by being hard and snobbish and lonely and isolated, and sometimes intolerant. He did not like himself when he had to be like that. It must be remembered that in repose his tendencies were definitely generous, liberal, humane, and benevolent ; he had a very real sympathy with the working classes ; he would often, when wayfaring, stop to talk in kindly way with a tramp. He had little pride in his titles. He hated falsehood, though he admired cleverness. He despised sycophants. His personal and business integrity was never questioned. He was almost fanatically devoted to his mother, and sent her a message of affection every day of his life when possible.

Although sometimes violent in both speech and action (once in his office he took a flying kick at the seat of the pants of a man who had annoyed him ; and on

another occasion put his foot through a man's hat in his temper), I cannot think of any really low thing he ever did. I never heard him swear ; I never saw him drink or smoke to excess. Drunkenness disgusted him. Gambling bored him. I never saw him play cards. He had no love of money. I had several times to pay his incidental expenses when travelling because he could not be bothered to carry money. He was said to have a special fondness for music, but he did not reveal it to me. If reading for pleasure, not duty, he liked a "go" at Dickens.

I always thought him a lonely man—rather splendidly and pontifically lonely. He so seldom sought advice, and treated it so roughly if he did not like it, that people hesitated to give it him. When he spoke, everybody else listened, usually without challenge. He suffered from too little opposition. He mixed but little with Society ; scarcely ever went out at night ; and more often than not was in bed by 9.30 and up again at 5.30. He seldom went to a theatre, and, when he did so, got the novice's thrill, whether the play was good, bad, or indifferent. He was so deeply moved by Seymour Hicks's *Man in Dress Clothes* that he insisted on giving it a "puff" every day for weeks. He said it was a great play "because it made me laugh and cry." He did not play many games. The only one I knew him at was golf, which he played as a "medicine" under the almost tyrannical guidance of his private professional,

Sandy Thompson. His handicap was a flattering ten ; but he was deadly with the putter. He was fond of fishing, and woe betide us if any other paper got the news of the " mayfly up " before we did.

He was charitable to a defeated foe. The nearest in my ken he came to being otherwise was when, after he had driven Asquith from office, he instructed us to print the " worst possible picture " of him. He defended this to me on the ground that the dangerous times required rough methods.

Although he continually exhorted journalists to be in touch with the bustling life of the world at all points, he touched but few of them in his later days himself. His contact was through others whom he employed at handsome remuneration—all picked specialists. To the end he complained that he never found the man to interpret the news of the West End of London as he wanted it interpreted. He insisted on " experts " for everything—an Etonian to describe the 4th of June ; a Roman Catholic to describe Lourdes ; a Jew to report a Jewish wedding ; an electrical engineer to criticise the telephones ; an American to describe baseball ; a Labour man to report on Labour conference ; a sailor to report yachting ; a lawyer (if he could get him) to report a murder trial ; and so on. Often one wondered what there was left for the ordinary routine journalist to report when his battalions of " experts " were marshalled.

Northcliffe founded the modern popular Press, and,

in doing so, corrected the pompous pose of our newspapers. He foresaw the tremendous results of that education for the masses which started in his youth. He foresaw the millions of new questioning minds, wanting to know in easy language the answers to Why? When? How? Where? Newspapers in those days were produced mainly for what we now call the "highbrows," or people of leisure and higher education. They were for most folk a mass of wordy obscurities—and how he hated anything obscure. Northcliffe decided to answer the new curiosity of the multitude. His weekly paper, *Answers*, was the first step, and it was an obvious development to apply the same principles to daily newspapers, which he soon did. He went down to the people to lift the people up. He profited much thereby, but, as Harold Spender admitted, "he came to Fleet Street simply to make money, but he remained to do public good." Critics may argue about the quality of the knowledge he gave the people—whether it strengthened their minds or merely stimulated them—but the fact stands clear that in almost every newspaper published to-day in this country, in our overseas Dominions, and even in foreign countries, the influence of Northcliffe is apparent and established. Practically every popular modern newspaper is a memorial to him.

It is true, however, to add that quite a number of developments in the modern popular Press are often wrongly ascribed to Northcliffe. For instance, he had no

use for the gossip column. He would not have it in the *Daily Mail*. He liked Court and Society paragraphs which recorded facts ; he liked news about people—personal stories, as they are called—but his “fact mind” revolted against the airy “we hears” and the intangible trivialities about precious nobodies and puff-seekers which have since come to be a staple of the gossip columns of many of our newspapers. He was always suspicious of the gossip column, and the news value of many of the people who got their names there. To him it was the place where you could tell a story without troubling much about facts. If you didn’t know enough about a person or an event to write a straight news story, you could always “write round it” idly in a gossip column. He would not stand for that.

Again, he was extremely conservative in matters of type and make-up of his newspapers. He would allow few changes, and those only after much thought and consultation with experts. “You do not understand type,” he would say to editorial men. “Consult the craftsman who knows. Changing a type is a most serious thing. The effect on your readers may be disastrous.” He had come to believe that his papers were typographically as near perfection as possible. Compared with most newspapers of 1931, they were quiet in display. I doubt if he foresaw how much more newspapers were going to have to appeal to the eye. I doubt if he would have approved the make-up of the modern popular

Press, with its amazing typographical gymnastics ; and I somehow think, too, that, keen as he was on the development of advertising, he would have resisted certain tendencies of the last few years : I mean in the matter of giving advertisements ascendancy over the news. People, he used to say, bought newspapers primarily for the news, " and if you are going to let bludgeoning advertisements kill your news, you are going to kill your newspaper." He said such advertisements were inefficient work, and did neither the advertiser nor the paper any good. Because he changed the face of things in the Press, Northcliffe has suffered the attacks that come to all pioneers. He has been hit at by the tradition worshippers as an irresponsible phenomenon. All the faults of the modern popular Press are laid at his door. This is wrong. Because he brightened things up in his day he did not lose his sense of serious news and facts ; he did not minimise the important things when he tried to make them interesting ; he expanded the lighter and informative side of newspapers, but did not lose sight of their real function—news. I often wonder, if Northcliffe could come back, whether he would approve of all that our modern popular Press has done. I doubt it. I think he would have directed its development in some ways on different lines.

Northcliffe's intense " Britishness " has obscured for many people the monumental work he did for the promotion of Anglo-American amity. He had, it is true,

not the slightest use for the fawning namby-pambies who thought that that amity was best secured by licking America's boots. He knew the contempt of the blunt Americans for that sort of thing. He spent large sums of money sending members of his staffs of all grades to the United States, not only to study methods of business, but also to grasp and understand the American outlook. If ever the Americans had a real friend outside their own country it was Northcliffe ; if ever there was a sound and sensible advocate of Anglo-American friendship it was Northcliffe. His fault—and, as in the case of all big men, his faults were magnified accordingly—was that he ran counter to many who really shared his views but did not like his methods, just as he did not like theirs.

Northcliffe died in a little wooden hut on the roof of his magnificent home in Carlton Gardens, London. He had been put there to get the benefit of air and isolation. It is due to his memory to add a few words about what people called the "mystery" of his death, especially as the incorrect story that he "died mad" (the words are those of my old friend and colleague, Hannen Swaffer, who should have known better) has been revived in the American Press. There was no mystery about his death. The medical history which I give in my diary as I took it from the doctor's own lips did much, when it was published at the time, to dispel absurd rumours ; and it is as well that it should be repeated.

It is true there was a period during his illness when

the Chief's pitiable physical collapse reacted on his mental condition and his mind rambled. Lord D'Abernon's published diary of Northcliffe's visit to Cologne in June 1922 tells us that "his powerful brain was already affected by his illness." He became worse before he became better, and not merely body, but *being* (the word the doctor uses), was seriously ill. Yet even when he was suffering from the passing delirium his mind was on the passion of his life—reporting ; so that he sent that dramatic message in a ghostly whisper across the telephone : "I hear they are saying I am mad. . . . Send down the best reporter for the story." Northcliffe recovered from this phase. He became normal again. Once or twice there was a ray of hope, and the doctors wondered if the miracle were going to happen after all. That was during the last fortnight. He had begun to discuss things again ; had talked quietly of various affairs and people—of his mother, of the chimes of Big Ben, whose tower he could just see from his roof retreat. But he was much too weakened to pull through.

I think he came to believe he had been poisoned in Germany. "I took a risk going there ; they got me," he said to a friend before he died. Earlier he had refused, like everybody else, to believe it. Some say his weight-reducing helped to undermine his constitution. He certainly pursued this business with characteristic thoroughness, and I remember his

boasting to me at Pau a few months before his death of the poundage he had lost and his promise to get rid of ten more pounds of flesh. Those of us who were with him in whole, or in part, during the war are content to believe that the fierce, restless energy he put into the unswerving pursuit of victory brought about more than anything his comparatively early end. He was really a "war victim." The disappointment of his life was that he was not at the Peace Conference. He could not see why he should not have been "called in" after all he had done for victory for the Allies.

Northcliffe will be remembered as a good employer. He was ready to give anybody a chance, and, as failures under a system like that are heavy, he was unjustly saddled with a reputation for "sackings." He demanded efficiency, and would not retain a worker who failed to give it him. But he paid high wages for it. He raised greatly the economic status of the journalist and the printer. In his will he remembered all his 6000 workers, high and humble. There was three months salary for almost everybody, representing £533,000. When the reckoning-up came, that part of the estate which was to bear this charge was found to be insufficient by £100,000. Lord Rothermere stepped in most generously to honour the wishes of "my great brother" regarding the staff. He himself paid the money.

CHAPTER II

MEN AROUND "THE CHIEF"

Much is to be learned about Northcliffe by studying some of the men he grouped around him at the top of his newspaper enterprise—the "higher-ups," as he called them. Few of them could be accused of soft-heartedness or sentimentality. Most of them had come up from near the bottom by sheer hard work, and that had left an ineradicable hardness of character. Scarcely one among them had had time or money to go to University; and the majority, even those whom Northcliffe set to look after the business side rather than the editorial, had graduated first as journalists, through the usual routine of reporting, sub-editing, and editing. There was never any secret, of course, about the Chief's preference for the writing as opposed to the business end: and it should be remembered that the foundations of his great enterprises were laid by journalists.

Thomas Marlowe, the Editor and Chairman, was, I suppose, the outstanding example of Northcliffe's uncanny instinct for finding the right man. No account of Northcliffe's journalistic life can be complete without him—and in a high place. Northcliffe wanted a loyal echo. He got one, but Marlowe's loyalty did not

exclude a measure of independence and rare judgment. These qualities were often needed to temper down Northcliffian impetuosity. Sometimes they failed, but there were notable occasions when they succeeded. In general, however, Northcliffe set the course and Marlowe kept it with captain's discretion, and his mark was seldom absent from the paper. He did not lack boldness or courage. His refusal on the outbreak of war to support Northcliffe's opposition to sending our troops to France, was an example. Another was his decision, despite a contract, not to print some of H. G. Wells's articles which were critical of France ; and an earlier example was his blunt refusal to cease campaigning against Jellicoe during the war.

Sir Auckland Geddes, then at the Admiralty, had sent for Marlowe and said : " Your paper is conducting a campaign to get Jellicoe out." Marlowe replied, " But you didn't send for me to tell *you* that." " No," said Sir Auckland, " I sent for you to tell you to stop it." " I refuse," said Marlowe. Sir Auckland looked at him quietly and said, " You must be a strong fellow. Good morning." Sir Auckland then went over to the Attorney-General and suggested Marlowe might have to be arrested. Through a friendly channel, word of this reached Marlowe, and he said, " Let him go ahead." Nothing happened, but a day or two later Marlowe heard privately—so privately that he could not publish the information—that Jellicoe had gone. Without

independent confirmation the news could not be published, and Marlowe himself went out and spent hours "fishing" without success. He would, I am sure, have given £1,000 to anybody who could have got the news in such form that he could use it. He had to go to Press without it, and next day it was published officially for anybody to know.

Marlowe had a more spacious mind than the rest of Northcliffe's *entourage*, and he also had the same faculty as Northcliffe for being frequently and deliberately illogical in his way of summing up things. As this trait often affected his dealings with the staff, and as he was also something of a martinet, he did not inspire any surplus of affection there. Besides, he appeared to some of us to have a somewhat sensitive ear for criticism by outside people whom we thought rather snobbish. I may be prejudiced because I suffered, and, anyhow, this sort of sensitiveness is a common failing among editors. Most of his staff feared Marlowe. He had the voice and the presence of masterful authority. He strode through his job like a man who believed that apologies were never needed. Always known to the staff as "T. M.," he had the vigorous bearing and sprawling walk of a retired admiral. He was said to receive £5,000 a year, and we all agreed that if he did he deserved every penny of it, since he bore the brunt of all the Northcliffe storms. He was tall and handsome, with grey eyes large enough to imply generosity. He

was certainly our best-groomed man, and more in touch with the outside world, with statesmen and politicians and the life of the West End, than any of the other elders. He had a curious trick of pursing up his bottom lip. This gave his mouth a bulldog touch that made young reporters quake. In his more expansive moods, standing with back to fire in his magnificent room, telling a good story and smoking a Turkish (he smoked no other), he was good to look upon and to know, and his smile and eye-twinkle were well worth winning. He liked to have about him nice-looking young men of meticulous appearance. I believe that more than one otherwise passable newspaper man has said good-bye to the *Daily Mail* because his hair parting was not beyond question, or his mouth opened too wide, or he looked sleepy, or unwittingly committed the unpardonable offence of wearing a Guards' tie. You may say these men were victims of sheer snobbishness. Well, there was certainly a touch of English aloofness and another touch of Irish bossiness about Marlowe, and I should imagine those were two of the qualities for which Northcliffe picked him. For Marlowe's spice of Irish also meant imagination ; and as for snobbishness, there are worse vices, anyhow.

Purely as a journalist, " T. M." stood very high. He had learned his job as a reporter on the *Star* under Ernest Parke, in those less opulent days when he flirted with the " Social democrats." Thence to reporting

on the *Evening News*, and to chief sub-editing on the *Mail* before he became Editor. He knew news, and had alertness, knowledge, imagination, decision, and judgment. He could spot good men and new writers and give them their head. He had mastered detail, but he also knew how to detach himself from it and delegate responsibility and authority to others. If he gave men chances, they were real ones as far as he was concerned. He gave me mine, and I have ever been in his debt for it. He had great driving force—that mysterious gift for compelling others to do what you want without standing over them. His was “man of the world” journalism, nourished by the opulent conditions under which he was privileged by Northcliffe to exercise it. He was always fidgety when Northcliffe was about, and he put up with a lot of nagging. I have seen scenes between them so painful that I wanted nothing less than to fall through the floor to escape seeing any more. There were in the later days many occasions of cool relationship between them ; but Northcliffe could never trust himself to let Marlowe go. I happen to know that to the end he valued “ T. M.” and his loyalty and judgment. Marlowe taught us younger men many tricks of the game. One of his best maxims for journalists was : “ It is the improbable that often happens.” That won me several scoops—by following up some report that seemed wildly improbable. Marlowe himself wrote with masterly terseness and force, but always anonymously.

I do not think he ever wrote a signed article. I tried to persuade him to write something when Northcliffe died. He declined. "Won't you come out of your shell for once?" I pleaded. "Come off my perch, you mean. No! I do not like reminiscences. I shall not leave a scrap of paper behind." Wasn't he a Frenchman who wrote: "One has never reached a position of importance in journalism till he has ceased to write."

Then there was Caird (later Sir Andrew, because of services with U.S. Mission), who had come via Scottish and Manchester journalism to be Night Editor of the *Mail* and then was grabbed by Northcliffe for the Board and the financial side of things. He was a great power among us—"a watcher of the halfpennies," as Northcliffe used to say; a sort of liaison watchdog for all departments. I always got on very well with him because under his rough exterior he was really a very human being, whose bark was much worse than his bite. When I first joined the paper he said to me: "We don't want any of your fancy wrrritn. We want just facts. Make your story read so that a man coming off an Atlantic liner to-morrow can understand what it's about." I always thought Caird in his black morning coat, with his shrewd dark eyes, close cropped hair, and bull-like neck, looked like a schoolmaster as he chewed away at his pipe. Once when I stayed on late to finish off a job—it was when the news of Captain Scott's tragedy came through—he crept up to me and

whispered : " Good on ye ! Let me tell you this. The worrk that has paid me best is the worrk I have done for nothing." Well, I wondered what the National Union of Journalists would say about that ! Caird as the cautious Scot was Northcliffe's very special butt for most of his playful jokes about expenses. " This will make Sir Andrew sit up." " Sir Andrew will be on my track." " Put every penny in your expenses and see that Sir Andrew pays." " Spend all the money you can : Sir Andrew won't mind," he would say ; but you soon learned that Sir Andrew not only minded, but mattered. He was the Chief's own appointed check for the Chief's own generosity, and was pretty effective too. An outburst of generosity by the Chief on one's behalf generally meant a subsequent unpleasant half-hour with Caird. When I came back from the United States, where Northcliffe had given me written authority to " spend all the money you can," I nevertheless had to render an account to Caird, and had to push hard to get it through. Well, now, you couldn't expect a man with a job like that to be a rollicking humorist in the eyes of his colleagues, could you ? Caird was a blunt man with a blunt job. At least you always knew where you were with him. There was no humbug. I liked him.

W. J. Evans was a man few of his colleagues got to know—a real office oyster. He, too, had gone through the mill of journalism. Like Marlowe, he had been one

of Ernest Parke's young men on the *Star*. He was the king pin of the *Evening News*, and he was very close in most other affairs to Northcliffe, who valued greatly his newspaper knowledge, judgment, and caution. "He is one of the three men," Northcliffe once said to me, "to whom I would leave complete control of Carmelite House." You would never have thought that of the dour, lonely little figure who passed you without a word in the corridors, looking thoroughly fed up with the world. When he retired in 1922, Northcliffe made a great fuss of him at a big farewell luncheon—indeed, made a thundering news story of the proceedings, which I don't think pleased Evans, for I cannot believe he particularly wanted Northcliffe to tell the world, as he did, that Evans was retiring with a gift of £10,000, a pension for ten years of £2,500, and £1,000 a year after that period. I came very little in contact with Evans in Carmelite House, and it was only when I met him on visits to France with Northcliffe that I got under his skin and found out how far from the mark were first impressions. Behind his undemonstrative bearing were wonderful knowledge, experience, and shrewdness; when he warmed to the joys of relaxation he led us on exciting voyages of exploration after French food and wine.

Pomeroy Burton (later Sir Pomeroy) was the big noise on the managerial side. He apparently had no doubt that Northcliffe was right in saying, "Big rooms

mean big ideas," and there was nothing of the small stuff about "P. B." Northcliffe had brought him from the *New York World*, where he had been one of Pulitzer's "young men"—City Editor. He had a deep and wonderfully pleasing voice, and spoke the nicest American I ever heard. For the most part he held court in majestic aloofness in his room upstairs.

Then there was Sutton (later Sir George, Bart.), the man nearest of them all to the Chief. We of the *Mail* knew him only as a Sphinx in the background, the Chief's right-hand man at the vast, money-making periodicals factory—the Amalgamated Press in Farringdon St. Austere, uncommunicative, intense, a tall, thin-lipped man with black piercing eyes in a parchment face, a man of nerves and Oriental inscrutability, he was always an enigma. Once or twice, when I came to know him better, he emerged for a few minutes from his shell and I saw that much of what we thought was frigidity was just native shyness. He talked of his younger days as a clerk (in 1889) in the *Star* publishing office, then under T. P. O'Connor. "I often feel," he said, "that T. P. introduced me to Fleet Street." Young Sutton was a first-class shorthand writer and when he saw an advertisement for one he applied and was asked to call at 108 Fleet Street. There Alfred Harmsworth and his brother Harold (now Lord Rothermere) interviewed him and gave him the job. They were working together on *Answers*, Harold as the business brains and Alfred

as the ideas merchant, Harold no doubt very often saving Alfred from financial disaster. Sutton parted company with the *Star* with regret. He has told me with a touch of pride the reflected glory he enjoyed from the brilliant staff—"the most brilliant of the day in London—Charles Hands, Clement Shorter, Springfield, A. B. Walkley, H. W. Massingham, Ernest Parke, and, later on, George Bernard Shaw. There was also the famous Captain Coe." Sutton was twenty when he joined "the Chief." Thirteen years later he became a Director of the Amalgamated Press and at 44 he was Vice-Chairman, and the established confidant of Northcliffe. The secret of his success with Northcliffe was "because I worked." The thing that impressed him most about Northcliffe was "his marvellous initiative." The thing that impressed Northcliffe about Sutton (so the Chief once said) was "his faithfulness." Sutton was always there—quiet, silent, firm, cautious. Here then was the man who was given power of attorney, who knew all the Chief's secrets, who became executor of the will, who was in the years to come to bring his Chief home from abroad to die, and then to become the guiding hand of Northcliffe House for his brother, Lord Rothermere.

Kennedy Jones I never met. He had gone in for other things than newspapers, but was still remembered with awe in Carmelite House.

In charge of the advertising side was Wareham

Smith, a sharp-featured little man who was a real "go-getter." He deserves a book about the pioneer part he played in the development of newspaper advertising. He had many rough passages with Northcliffe because, even in those days, the Chief was disturbed at the inroads made by the advertisement department on the news columns. "You are killing the news," he would say. "I have instructed the editorial department to take out any of your bludgeoning advertisements. I want to encourage advertising, but I will not perform Byzantine genuflections before it." One night, Northcliffe, probably to show he was serious, got the editorial man in charge to "chuck out" a £500 advertisement. Next morning the bewildered Wareham asked the why and wherefore. He was told to go and ask the Editor. He did so, and then went back to Northcliffe. "The Editor says he exercised the power and discretion you gave him," said Wareham, "and I said that was all right, but just for my future guidance I asked why he threw out this particular advertisement, and he said it was because it contained a drawing of a man wearing a soft collar—and he implied that was not done in the best circles." "Well," replied the Chief, "I must leave that to him." "But may I point out, Chief," urged the persistent Wareham, "that *you* are wearing a soft collar?" Wareham Smith, although often in collision with the Chief about advertisements, came in his later days to admit that Northcliffe was right in restraining

any tendency for advertisements to dominate the news for which the public buys its newspapers.

There was another Smith—Valentine, the volcanic circulation manager, a great big fellow (big-hearted too), who loved music and pictures, but above all his job. And that was net sales. He was a terrific worker, with a high-pitched whip of a voice and an incredible command of forcible language. He was the noisy architect of the million and more sale. He said if he gave his mind to it he could sell anything, good or bad. He was the instigator of the roaring publicity “circuses” that descended in expected and unexpected places from Land’s End o John o’ Groats to boom, and made astounded people buy, his paper. He was a rare fighter ; he was always after the other fellow and “going to knock him sideways.” And yet in his quiet moments (they were quite infrequent) he would be a philosopher, and would smilingly wonder if this wild scramble for net sales would not be its own Nemesis.

The news organisation was in the hands of W. G. Fish, the very embodiment of efficiency and drive. He had started as an agency reporter. No one knew the news ropes—all of them—like Fish. There is more about him in this book.

On the mechanical side there was C. F. Hart, the big, bluff genius at his job who later went to the *New York Times*.

All these men—and of course there were others—

were the last word in efficiency and driving force in their respective departments. They were Northcliffism with full steam up, and it was terrible to get in their way.

It was into this atmosphere of "get-on-or-get-out" that, against the advice of some of my very good friends, I plunged eagerly in 1911. I was twenty-seven. The first fortnight was the most dismal period of my life that I can remember. The hard solemnity of the "higher-ups" ran practically right through the whole staff down to the humblest tape-room boy. Everybody seemed to take life and work with an awful seriousness to which I found it difficult to accommodate myself. There had been a certain happy-go-lucky-ness about my career hitherto. I had taken my first steps in journalism at a pound a week under F. G. Kellaway on the *Lewisham Journal*, and then had followed the cheerful Kellaway's good advice to "get out of this and see the world. There's nothing more to learn here." I had gone to Hong Kong with Douglas Story on the *South China Morning Post*, and three years later spent all my savings coming home again through Japan, Korea, Siberia, Russia, and Germany, because I wanted badly to see all of the world that was available. I had then failed to get a job in Fleet Street because my travels had placed me "out of touch"—so said all the editors I called on. So, my boyish vanity crushed, I went to Manchester, where, thanks to H. M. Richardson (now secretary of

the National Union of Journalists) and Alexander Paterson, the managing editor of Hulton's establishment at Withy Grove, I was given the chance to start at the bottom again on the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* at £2 5s. a week. Soon afterwards they sent me to London as News Editor of the *Daily Sketch* at £5 a week. After a while I got married and asked for more money. Edward Hulton (later Sir Edward) sent for me. "You have big prospects here," he said to me in that little room overlooking Fleet Street, "but we've no money for increases in salary just now." "Well," said I, "make my salary guineas instead of pounds—just to show my work is appreciated." "No," he snapped. "Then I shall leave you." "You'll be a fool." "All for five bob, Mr. Hulton."

Next day Thomas Marlowe received my application for a job on the *Daily Mail*. He started me on the foreign sub-editing staff at £6 6s. a week. James Heddle (my best friend at Hulton's along with W. H. Armitt and W. Buchanan Taylor) tried to persuade me to stay. "Think what you are going to be up against at the *Mail*," urged Heddle; "the cream of Fleet Street—Charlie Hands, Fish, Hamilton Fyfe, Beattie, Curdock." He certainly had scared me momentarily. Then there was the journalist from Hull who said, "Northcliffe will suck your brains and then sack you."

Laughing at their fears, full of beans and self-importance maybe, I came to the *Mail*. What a quick

check my exuberance got ! I wrote in my diary after the first night :

“More like a school than a newspaper office. They look on me as a provincial intruder. Everything very serious. A Scots sub-editor gave two office-boys a terrible wiggling when he caught them playing noughts and crosses. Nobody smiles. Nobody goes out for supper—just gobbles it up when he can. They say if you last six months here you are all right. Shall I ? ”

I think now with a smile of those first dismal days in an atmosphere of ruthless efficiency ; but life then did seem to me to be without a laugh. Scarcely anyone took any notice of the newcomer. I felt I was being frozen out. I began to feel unsure of myself. There were no words of encouragement. Was one's work satisfactory or not ? Everybody seemed frightened to express an opinion. The whole staff seemed to be merely machines working to the orders of some hidden despot, to rules yet a mystery to me—a mystery no one deigned to explain. When a stout little man in a black morning coat came up and asked me kindly how I was finding things, I nearly collapsed with surprise at this outburst of friendliness, and was about to suggest he joined me later at the Press Club for a drink when I realised he was Andrew Caird, the Night Editor, and far too important to go imbibing with juniors. I remember him gratefully as one of the human beings of those early days. There were one or two others who helped me survive

the gloom—a droll, taciturn sub-editor, Fisher by name ; and another from New Zealand named White-law, who sat next to me at the sub-editor's table and lapsed now and then, when no one was looking, into a smile or surreptitious joke ; there was the genial Percy Izzard, of "Country Diary" fame, and there was a cheerful soul from "Upstairs" named Tom George, the printer, radiating good fellowship whenever he popped his head among the "editorial," and always ready to greet and to help the bewildered "new chum." Then there was always Charles Hands, worshipped by the younger folk as the greatest of special correspondents of world-wide experience and reputation. Charles was mellow, kind, wise, placid, and a real friend to the young and the newcomer. He was yet another of Ernest Parke's *Star* brigade who had migrated to Northcliffe and won a pedestal for himself which placed him well beyond all the clatter of the crowd. The full philosophy of all the classics was his. Nothing perturbed him. To Charles nothing seemed to matter. Yet when he spoke, everybody listened. He was really quite out of place among all those big, blatant noises. Yet he quietly triumphed with what has been called "effortless superiority" over them all. The less he spoke the more he said. He held the affection of the Chief—and all others in the show—as no one else did. He was one of the few men who did not seem to fear Northcliffe. There was Hamilton Fyfe, too, who, when he was not

scouring the world in search of picturesque copy, blew in to see us slaves—always with a cheery word—so urbane and unruffled. He came in one night during the Standard Bread campaign and caused roars of laughter by announcing, “ I’ve just discovered the biggest joke of all about Standard Bread. Curnock [who was running the stunt with a full head of steam] believes in it ! ”

I did not stay long in the sub-editor’s room. When localised editions were started for the Midlands and the West I was transferred to run them with George Curnock and Peter Goudie—the last named had come up to town recently from Nottingham, and he and I had a fellow feeling in the blizzard I think we both felt we had struck in London journalism.

We heard little and saw nothing of the great driving force behind this vast business which had engulfed us and seemed like destroying all our individuality. Then, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, I found myself one day face to face with the driving force itself—face to face with Northcliffe.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE THE GREAT WAR

Jan. 1, 1912 : This New Year's Day, about 12.30 p.m., I was sitting at my desk in the news room of the *Daily Mail* at Carmelite House when Walter Fish, the News Editor, came in with more than usual briskness and said: "Clarke, have you met the Chief?" (Northcliffe was always "the Chief").

"No."

"H'm—I see—h'm. Well—better get your lunch quick. See Pomeroy Burton first. He's got the circulation figures, and the Chief wants someone to go down to Sutton Place with them. There's nobody else I can find to go but you."

Pomeroy Burton is the manager. Upstairs I made my first acquaintance with the majesty of managerial offices ; got my papers from Burton, and off I went to catch the 2.20 from Waterloo for Woking.

I did a little self-examination in the train. I was twenty-seven. Well, that wasn't very old, and I hoped I should pass Northcliffe's youth test. Wasn't it Pulvermacher the "copy-taster" who said the Chief held that any man who hadn't made a place for himself by thirty was a failure? I had still more than three years to go

then, and, after all, I had not been very long with the *Mail*.

Or was it thirty-five? Had not the Chief recently told Claude Taylor, News Editor of the *Daily Mirror*, that it didn't matter what a man did till he was thirty-five, adding, "Until then all is experience; but by thirty-five you must have settled down to the job you mean to do in life if you are going to take it seriously."

How old was Northcliffe, anyhow? At this moment forty-seven. Funny about that "Too Old At Forty" stunt!

Working at last, and a Rolls Royce. Pine, the chauffeur, gave the salute of importance due to a Chief's messenger. I asked if I might sit alongside him instead of in the saloon, and as we drove off I said: "Has the Chief any other cars?"

"*His Lordship* has seven."

One to him! I felt there was nothing more to say about that, so we discussed the landscape.

Five miles' drive and Sutton Place came into view—an entrancing Henry VIII mansion, an ecstasy of oak panellings, quaint furniture, nooks and wonderful stairways, surrounded by park and gardens. What a setting for this very Red Letter Day in my life, the day of my first meeting with the newspaper king. What did it bode?

A quick, clear voice in the echoing corridor, a

rustling at the door, and in a second I was grasping a large, friendly hand and looking into magic eyes.

So this was Northcliffe, this square-faced man of breadth rather than height, looking a little crouching and knock-kneed in his dark-brown golf coat and "bags."

He pulled at his tie—a red one with white spots—wished me a happy New Year, and apologised for keeping me waiting.

"I've been out with my golf 'doctor'—driven hundreds of balls from one spot . . . golf drill. . . . Sit down. . . . Have tea? . . . What are *you* in *my* business?"

"I am news-editing the local editions."

"Do you like it? How old are you? Do you know Mr. Marlowe? An ideal editor—so firm—so just—a splendid man. Ring up the *Daily Mail*."

"The telephone is . . .?"

"Don't you know? . . . It's in there . . ." in a tone that seemed a rebuke that any journalist should be in any house without finding out at once where the telephone was.

As I moved off to the adjoining room he indicated, he turned to the documents I had brought him showing that his pet paper had a daily sale nearing 900,000 copies.

The little room I was in was exquisitely furnished and appointed. There was a square polished desk with a battery of sharpened pencils and two telephones. On

the right was a signed portrait of Lord Roberts ; on a little table to the left a signed portrait of A. J. Balfour to Lady Northcliffe, with an inscription of his sincere admiration and his memories of Sutton Place. . . . Burke and Debrett on the ledge behind, and a half-length oil painting of the Chief, vigorously done, though I don't know by whom, on the opposite wall.

I took up the telephone receiver : " I want Holborn 6000, please. When you get through, please call me at Guildford 130."

There came a machine-gun fire of words from the next room. " Don't waste words. Wait till they ask you, and then just say 130. Be precise ! Are you an Irishman ? "

" My father was," I said. " I was born in Lancashire. My mother was Cheshire."

" I thought there was something like that. You have got a mixture of all three accents. . . . Now take some tea."

He was pacing the floor, waiting for the telephone call. He had put on a pair of spectacles, which softened his heavy, powerful face. When the call came, he asked for Marlowe, the Editor. There were some rapid questions—fleeting references to " food taxes," " Garvin," " silly-silly," " madness." Then he telephoned *The Times* and asked for " Robin " (Geoffrey Robinson, the Editor), and told him he had a very good paper that morning.

THE CHIEF'S ROOM

All this may seem very trivial, but the circumstances of this first meeting compel me to set down all I saw, did, or heard. Did not Boswell say of his journals about Johnson : " Let me not be censured for mentioning such minute particulars : everything relative to so great a man is worth observing ? "

I was fascinated by Northcliffe's eyes and hair. Well enwrapped in flesh, the eyes seemed languid and indefinable in colour. They did not look the eyes of an active man. They appeared rather too kindly. As for his hair, I put my hand to my head to make sure on which side mine was parted, and then decided that Northcliffe parted his on the wrong side—at least, on the not very popular side, the right. I looked at a picture of Napoleon later this evening, and found that he also affected this style of hair parting . . .

" Would you like to look over this wonderful old house ? " I heard him saying, and he took my arm and led me from room to room, and at length—rather dramatically, I thought—whispered, " Come, I will show you my room. I can only work in solitude."

We passed a large open fireplace, which he said had been there since 1560, and into a long and narrow panelled chamber. A small flat-topped desk, looking so remote, so lost, in that vast apartment, was the only piece of furniture I noticed.

" I thought the little room down below was yours," I ventured.

“My dear young man,” he said, with a pretence of annoyance, “that was her ladyship’s room. . . . Little rooms are no good for big ideas.”

He picked up a time-table to look up a train for me, and he glanced over the top of his huge spectacles and said rather abruptly, “I suppose you know, young man, that all our readers earn at least £1,000 a year.”

I gave him a smile of doubt.

“Don’t make any mistake about it. You have got to cater for the £1,000 a year man. . . . Good night.”

He held out a chubby hand. “But what about the circulation figures and the leading article I am to take back?” I asked.

“I have changed my mind,” he said. “There’s your car waiting. A happy New Year.”

So I came back to the office feeling I had had an encounter with a human dynamo, but a little puzzled about that £1,000 a year business. Then it dawned on me. Was one of the secrets of *Daily Mail* success its play on the snobbishness of all of us?—all of us except the very rich and the very poor, to whom snobbishness is not important; for the rich have nothing to gain by it, and the poor have nothing to lose.

* * *

If, as I supposed, I had failed at this first meeting to impress Northcliffe, he had not failed to impress me. I had “fallen badly,” as the Americans say, for the charm of the man. But I was not yet fated to come into

close touch with him. During the next two years he was just a shadowy figure in the background. He was seldom heard of as having visited Carmelite House, and he appeared to carry out his ideas regarding the *Mail* through two or three of the heads. It was not until a later date that the famous *communiqués*, or daily messages of instruction and criticism, were circulated to the staff in general. It should be noted that at this period Northcliffe was much taken up with his new love, *The Times*. Printing House Square rather than Carmelite House was feeling the drive and energy of "Mr. X," as he was known in *The Times* office. The *Mail* was sixteen years old, a well-established money-maker, with no rival to be afraid of. No Beaverbrook had yet appeared on the horizon to stiffen the challenge of the *Daily Express*. Among us in the *Mail* office there was a feeling of ascendancy over all the other papers ; and the more aggressive folk, to whose heads the wine of success had rushed, never referred save with contempt to such other journals as the *Express*, *Daily News*, *Chronicle*, *Telegraph*. Moreover, any qualms about being considered vulgar upstarts of material success were allayed by the fact that respectability was also ours, now that *The Times* was of the family. It gave us a confident air of superiority. I'm afraid we of the *Mail* felt rather like indulging in patronage towards *The Times*, whose coffers, we thought, were being replenished with the hard-won fruits of our success ; yet, on the other

hand, my impression of the *Mail* at this period is that we were trying to live up to our new rôle as a sort of sister to *The Times*. We were, in fact, really in some danger of becoming too respectable. For instance, sub-editors were rebuked for using words like "lunch" instead of the more stately "luncheon"; "sweet-heart" instead of "fiancé"; "colonies" instead of "overseas dominions." Once I put a heading "Police Court Reports" on a bit of news from Vienna about a prisoner in the police court who had fired a revolver at the magistrate. I was severely rebuked for my levity. "It might do for the *Star*," I was told, "but not for us. Obviously you think the *Mail* is what it was ten years ago."

Except at third or fourth hand, we smaller fry of the *Mail* knew little at this period of the Chief, but his hand was always there when there was big stuff about. During the coal strike of 1912 the orders came thick and fast. Whatever he might do through *The Times* in the way of influencing public opinion, he could do far more through the *Mail*, with its millions. "Let it be called the black strike," was the order. It was obvious his sympathy, so often with the workers, was against them in this case. He thought mob rule might be coming, so the mob must be divided; the public must be shown how the miners were enjoying themselves at the seaside or dog races while helpless workers in other industries suffered from the "creeping paralysis." (How

he loved to invent these verbal vignettes.) There was also the *Titanic* wreck that year, and the inspiration that led the *Mail* to inaugurate the Woman's Fund in honour of the men who remembered women and children first.

It was not, however, until 1914 that events brought Northcliffe back at the double to his old love, the *Mail*. It also happened early that year that a change in my fortunes placed me in a position where I was bound to come in personal touch with him again. In February 1914, still worrying about *The Times*, Northcliffe decided to introduce some *Daily Mail* blood to Printing House Square to ginger up, as he said, the news services and reporting, and get some of our dash into them. So he sent George Beer, our able and very energetic Night News Editor, across to *The Times* as News Editor, and I took up Beer's post at the *Mail*. My duties started with the editorial conference at 5 o'clock and went on to 1 a.m.—when the paper "went to bed"—or later, as the flow of news dictated.

Luck soon favoured me, and I was pitchforked into the limelight through what I still consider as big a "scoop" as ever came my way. Those were troubled days in Ireland, and one night in March there came a telegram to the *Mail* from an out-of-the-way spot in Essex stating that the cavalry officers at the Curragh had "mutinied" rather than assist in the coercion of Ulster.

I went to consult Beattie, the Night Editor. "Clarke,"

he said, impatient and excited, "if this is true it is the biggest story since the Boer War. . . . And it's up to you."

My chance ! Only that day we had been working up the Irish news, and the Chief had ordered that our sole contents bill must be "The Bullying of Ulster." But how to begin finding news at the Curragh which began in Essex ? It was past 8 o'clock, so there was no opportunity to telegraph or telephone to the Essex village. I telephoned our Braintree correspondent, and sent him in a car to the address given. I telephoned Dublin, and sent a man by car to the Curragh. Then I thought if the report were true some of the officers would have advised their relatives in England. So the Army List, reference books, and telephone books were ferreted by three reporters, and we were lucky to strike the home of one of the officers in an English county town. What his relatives said in answer to our ring up made it plain there was something in the story—not mutiny, of course, but the resignation of officers who would not go to Ulster. In the meantime, Montague Smith, our political correspondent, had been sent to Downing Street, where, if true, the news must be known. He walked right into a Cabinet meeting, and hung on till past midnight, when Ministers were still sitting. Dublin and Essex came through with their news. The first message we had received from the Essex village came from someone who had a friend at the Curragh—a

“WAR” IN ULSTER

woman—who had telegraphed. The story began to fit like a jigsaw. Long before press time we were well away with it—four columns all to ourselves ; and ere our rivals read the news next day our special correspondents had been ordered to proceed to Ireland for what looked like “ war.” My diary the following day reads :

Saturday, March 21, 1914 : To-day the Chief is vitalising his whole organisation for “ war.” Caird has gone to Belfast as *generalissimo* of our “ war staff ” in Ireland, with Jimmy Dunn as his right-hand man. Half a dozen others are being sent post-haste to Ulster to-day. There is no sparing of money. We have hardly a reporter left in London to-night. Everybody is a “ war ” correspondent speeding to Ireland. Arrangements have already been made for Caird to take an office in Belfast, with code telegraphic address and communication codes. All staff and local men over there are to be handled from this general headquarters in Ireland. A special steamer has been chartered to bring copy to Liverpool in case other means are not available. Camera men have gone too, for, since the start of the picture régime last year, the Chief has become just as keen on pictures as on news. . . . Special courier services are being arranged to operate if necessary. All copy is to be dropped at Manchester and telegraphed or telephoned thence to London to save time. The Chief is leaving for Ulster to see things for himself.

My luck had been in over this sorry business. A handsome bonus gave me the measure of the Chief's recognition, and a few days later, when Walter Fish, my immediate chief, took a holiday, I found myself in his chair, acting as News Editor, the eye of Northcliffe direct on me and his words ringing in my ears : " Young man, this is *your* great chance."

Monday, April 6, 1914 : I am News Editor, acting for the first time in the chair held in succession by Lincoln Springfield, Charles Watney, R. D. Blumenfeld, and W. G. Fish. The Chief rang through at 11 o'clock. It is Easter week, and things are quiet. But it is always at these slack times that the Chief's interest in the paper is most active, and, as a rule, he insists on heads of departments not taking holidays during public holidays. " All our best brains ought to be on tap at such times," he said to-day, " to provide a bright paper and make the most of meagre news."

He said to me, " Well, young man, you have a great chance. We shall see what you can do. This is an awful time for news. . . . I am sure you will do well, though." I was glad of his confidence, but later in the day, when I saw how thin our news list was for the next day's paper, my spirits were not exactly high. The only real bit of news was a motor-car smash. A man cycling at Lewisham with his sweetheart had been run down in a quiet byway by a motor vehicle and killed. The car had driven on without stopping. At conference the

story was discussed as a fairly good one, but not of outstanding importance. It remained for Northcliffe to lift it above the commonplace and make a big "splash" story of it. He came in as I was finishing my narrative, and he got me to tell it all over again. "That's a great story for a quiet day like this," he said, quickening his words as he went along. "Work it up. Work it up. Start a hunt for the motorist who drove on. The *Daily Mail* must bring him to justice. What is the colour of the missing car? Call it 'The Mystery of the Blue Car,' or whatever the colour may be. You must have an introduction something like this: 'A highway holiday starting in beautiful weather, with countless thousands of motors and bicycles on the road, bearing everywhere the huge population which is only beginning to taste the joys of open-air travel, has been marred by a highway tragedy . . . and so on. . . .'" Under the Chief's inspiration we made this incident the peg on which to hang the general holiday story.

Tuesday, April 7, 1914: "Well," said the Chief this morning, "our paper is 'different.' Look at the other papers with their long, dry screeds about holiday crowds, the same stuff that is printed every time out of cold storage. Most of them have dismissed the motor accident and the man who drove on in a few lines. We used it to galvanise the whole of our holiday story. We look alive. They look dead. You did very well. Now get on the track of all road hogs. It has become a talking

CONDEMNING ROAD HOGS

point. Put Memory on the hunt for the missing motorist. (Memory is our crime expert.) Give him a car. Let him work up clues and theories. Get the A.A. patrols and the National Cyclists' Union to help in the search, and to issue statements condemning road hogs in the interests of well-behaved road travellers. If we don't do this we shall turn the sympathies of the public against all motorists, which we must not do."

March 11, 1914 : To-day, on Northcliffe's instruction, we "splash" an announcement that on Monday, March 16, *The Times* is to be reduced to one penny. The article is written with all the trumpet flourishes of the Chief.

May 9, 1914 : The Chief announces to-day that the sale of *The Times* has increased from 53,000 to 170,000 daily. He is sending daily bulletins to Printing House Square signed "Mr. X," praising or complaining about the paper. The other day he telegraphed 600 words criticism at full rates from Nice. . . . I am told he wanted to make *The Times* a halfpenny and had literally to be "physically restrained."

CHAPTER IV

START OF WAR

On Sunday, June 28, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was murdered at Sarajevo, Bosnia. There is no note about it in my diary. It has always seemed curious to me that the prophets of war who have since described this event as the planned and obvious signal failed to recognise it at the time. Northcliffe certainly did not recognise it. He, like many others, was wrapped up in the Irish deadlock, and as late as Monday, July 20, only five days before Austria and Servia started the conflict which was to set Europe aflame, he was preening himself at having secured a personal "scoop" about the King's decision to summon a conference of the leaders of all parties on the subject of Ulster. He published this news in the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* and chuckled about the slackness of his Liberal Press rivals for not knowing what was happening. He wrote an article two days later and headed it, "First with the News; Liberal Anger at *Daily Mail's* Coup: The 'Know Nothing' Press: The Punishment of Newspaper Slackers." In that article he mercilessly attacked the slackness of Liberal journalism, which he said was

“ part and parcel of the inertia of the Liberal Party at the moment. They have told their readers for months that the Ulster Army is provided with wooden guns, and their ignorance culminated last Monday in absolute lack of knowledge of the present conference in which their own Prime Minister has taken so large a part.”

By the end of that same week a different tune was suddenly being called. I was in charge of the news room on Sunday morning, July 26, when Fenton Macpherson, then our Foreign Editor, showed me two fateful telegrams. My diary now takes up the narrative :

Sunday, July 26, 1914 : These are fateful times. Europe is on the brink of war. The Ulster crisis looks like taking a back seat pretty quick. To-day we received a telegram from our correspondent at Vienna that war had been declared by Austria on Servia. Other news is ominous ; the German Fleet reported to be concentrating. What does it mean ? Fish was away until evening, and I was on the desk with Stannard as assistant. Marlowe was buzzing about rather impatiently this morning, wanting to know the news. I told him about the German Fleet report, and suggested, if it were true, that it would be unwise to demobilise our Fleet, which was still assembled after the recent mobilisation. Demobilisation was understood to be already in operation. “ Is it a fact that we are demobilising ? ” asked Marlowe. “ This is the report,” I replied. “ It seems a

TELEGRAM TO CHURCHILL

stupid thing to do just now," said Marlowe. "Still, I suppose they know what the Germans are doing." I suggested we should approach Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty. "Where is he?" asked Marlowe. I inquired, and found he was spending the week-end at his seaside bungalow at Overstrand, near Cromer. "Shall I send him a telegram?" I asked. Marlowe did not seem very keen. "He won't reply," he said. After some further conversation, however, he said, "You can if you like," and I then drafted a telegram to Churchill which I showed to Marlowe before sending. This was the telegram :

"July 26, 1914, 12.25 p.m. To Winston Churchill
Pear Tree Cottage Overstrand : WAR DECLARED
AUSTRIA SERVIA GERMAN FLEET CONCEN-
TRATING MAY WE ASK IS IT TRUE BRITISH
FLEET DEMOBILISING : DAILY MAIL."

I told Stannard to ring up the post office at Cromer some time afterwards to make sure the telegram was delivered, there being some uncertainty because it was Sunday. We got no reply to the telegram, but the Cromer post office told us that it had been delivered promptly to Churchill, who was out on the beach. Apparently the post office had been kept open for its distinguished visitor in case of emergency. Marlowe had asked if I would join him at luncheon at the Royal Automobile Club along with Macpherson and Valentine Williams, our "high politics" specialist and former

FLEET'S DEMOBILISATION STOPPED

Paris correspondent. Macpherson impressed me with the importance of the occasion and the wisdom of a youngster like myself being seen and not heard. "I've been to these pow-wows before, so take a word of advice from an old hand. Let Marlowe do the talking. You have been invited to listen, and I don't want you to make a false step." I thanked Macpherson for his advice, and I am afraid I did not follow it. As we drove along the Embankment in a taxicab we passed a battalion of London Territorials on the way to camp. I wondered if real war would soon be their lot. It struck me as being fortunate that all our Territorials were at this moment being mobilised for annual training. When we returned to the office, Marlowe was anxious to know if Churchill had replied. He had not. I then rang up our Cromer man to tell him to watch Churchill's movements. He replied that Churchill had decided to return hurriedly to town by the afternoon train arriving at Liverpool Street at 8 p.m. Late tonight, after Churchill's return, the Admiralty announced that orders had been given to the British Fleet not to disperse. I wonder if our telegram had anything to do with that.

[*Note* : About a year later controversy arose as to who had been responsible for stopping the demobilisation of the Fleet—Prince Louis of Battenberg, the First Sea Lord, who had remained that Sunday in charge at the Admiralty in London, or Mr. Winston Churchill,

PRINCE LOUIS' LETTER

at Cromer. Prince Louis, who in the meantime had been driven from office by an agitation run mainly by the *Globe*, sent to the Press for publication in August 1915 a letter he had addressed to Mr. Churchill, to the effect that the unauthorised publication "of a private note of mine concerning certain action which I took when in charge of the Admiralty on July 26, 1914, has been the basis of various strictures on you. I greatly regret this, since you as First Lord and I as First Sea Lord acted during this critical time in perfect harmony and with absolute mutual trust, as is shown by the following statement of what occurred at the Admiralty on that day. The news from abroad on the morning of July 26 was certainly in my opinion very disquieting, and when you called me up on the telephone from Cromer about lunch-time I was not at all surprised to hear you express the same view. You then asked me to take any steps which, in view of the foreign situation, might appear desirable. You reminded me, however, that I was in charge of the Admiralty, and should act without waiting to consult you. You also informed me that you would return that night instead of next morning. . . ." Prince Louis then explained how he stopped the demobilisation, which was to be begun on the following morning early. Recently, when I met Mr. Churchill, I was, perhaps pardonably, curious to know if he remembered my telegram, especially as it appeared he had telephoned to Prince Louis after

receiving it "about lunch-time." Mr. Churchill said he remembered quite well the delivery of the telegram to him on the sands, and that it confirmed information in his possession.]

Thursday, July 30, 1914: "All Europe Arming" is our splash to-day.

Saturday, August 1, 1914: Our headlines tell the news—yesterday "Europe Drifting to Disaster." To-day—"Bank Rate Doubled : King not to go to Cowes," and so on. To-day I heard a colleague telephoning instructions to his wife to order in all sorts of things, including flour, rice, sugar, hams, etc. She replied, "If there is war and things get as bad as all that, all food-supplies will be pooled and the rich will have no advantage over the poor." I'm told there is also a run on gold.

Sunday, August 2, 1914: Northcliffe is back post-haste from Ulster, and we are feverishly organising in a bewildered sort of way for what may be the biggest war in history. To-day we publish a Sunday midday special, with "War Edition" in red ink alongside the title, and our heads run "Germany Begins War : Invasion of Luxemburg : To-day's Cabinet."

Monday, August 3, 1914: J. Coudourier de Chassigne, London correspondent of the Paris *Figaro*, rang me up to-night in despair. "Have you any news?" he asked. "Oh, are you going to go to the help of France? I know the whole British nation is with us, but this rotten 'wait and see' Government of yours, when will they

THE PLUNGE TAKEN

move? Soon it will be too late. Already the Germans have crossed the frontier. You have lost days now. It is terrible. You can understand how I feel. Cannot Lord Northcliffe and the *Mail* do something? What is going to happen?" I tried to calm him. I feel we ought to go in, and at once. We have led France to expect our support. We have taken advantage of our friendship with her to withdraw our big fleet from the Mediterranean. In honour we are bound to go in.

Wednesday, August 5, 1914: The suspense is all over. We are at war with Germany. To-day our splash is "Great Britain declares War on Germany," and there is a recruiting appeal in the paper too—"Your King and country need you"—addressed to all men between eighteen and thirty. The mock warfare of Ulster is already forgotten. People speak of it in whispers of shame. The history of the past few days is a nightmare both in and out of newspaperland. Now we have taken the plunge one feels better already. The great war that we have had in our innermost thoughts, but have always kept in reserve, in the belief that it would be for our children or our children's children to go through is here, and *we* are to go through it. The country is serious and sober and surprised. None of us wanted war. Last night, when at midnight the news came that we had taken the great decision, the streets were packed with people, who cheered and sang the National Anthem before the Palace, but there was no Mafficking.

20 THURSDAY [110-255]

Chief very angry today. I sent a wireless in Tom Webster's name to Jack Dempsey at sea asking him to reply. He did - but only "interview" he gave by wireless & we had to treat it exclusively for Tuesday's paper. It came addressed to Webster, who was away & Crockett put it unopened in his "personal" sack. "Send Crockett to see me - here - at - 1 Carlton Road. Don't he know - doesn't everyone know - that all private messages sent to office are to be opened. I gave that instruction years ago. Even if addressed to me & marked personal & private confidential they are to be opened. . . . Send Crockett to me."

Later in the day I wished a lot by telephoning direct to Chief, as they were forbidden to do & pleaded for Crockett. Chief was at lunch. "My dear Tom," he said. "is that all you want?" me for. My bark is worse than my bite. Don't you worry." Later in the day when he phoned me I apologized for having phoned him. "At any time I expect you to telephone me if you think fit. That's what I am there for. I shall soon kick you if you do it without real reason."

They know we are in for a hard thing. They are confident, but not cocky. Everybody is thinking to-day of the North Sea. The decisive battle might be fought there even this night. I have been on duty almost continuously since Friday, day and night. Now we are pushing the bells and pulling the strings organising the reporting of the war. We seem to be spending money like water. I feel quite envious of our army of war correspondents. One of them is our Sporting Editor. I saw Northcliffe to-night. He was in a temper, and made quite a scene about the plans for a British Expeditionary Force for France. To our amazement, he declared quite vehemently that he was quite opposed to sending our soldiers to France.

"What is this I hear," he cried, "about a British Expeditionary Force for France? It is nonsense. Not a single soldier shall leave this country. We have a superb Fleet, which shall give all the assistance in its power, but I will not support the sending out of this country of a single British soldier. What about invasion? What about our own country? Put that in the leader. Do you hear? Not a single soldier will go with my consent. Say so in the paper to-morrow."

It was an extraordinary outburst, which we all heard with surprise and dismay. It was followed by feverish comings and goings of the editorial pundits. We lesser fry not at the moment concerned with high policy could only wonder what had happened—and what was

still happening. One man suggested that it was all a subtle plot on the part of the Chief to hoodwink Germany. The preparation of the Expeditionary Force is supposed to be a dead secret and—so this colleague argued—the Chief might be running a bogus agitation against it to encourage the Germans to believe that England need not be taken into account, and then let them find out their mistake to their sorrow when confronted with the surprising spectacle of British troops in France. Anyhow, something has happened in the meantime and we have gone to press—much behind time—and said nothing of any opposition to the sending of our troops. I gather there has been a great duel going on about it between the Chief and Marlowe (the Editor), and Marlowe seems to have won. The printers have had a lively night. They received two separate leaders, one prepared by the Chief and the other by Marlowe, and two separate articles and banner lines for the news pages—one (by the Chief) against sending troops to France : the other (by Marlowe) ignoring the Chief's view. Both were prepared for publication in page form, and up to the last minute the printers did not know which of the pages would be passed for publication. The Editor went up to the case-room, and, putting his finger on the shoulder of Tom George, the printer in charge, said, "Neither of these pages goes through without my express order." He looked as though he meant to go to any length to thwart the

“TIPPERARY”

Chief—to steer him off his disastrous intention. During the evening the Chief, I hear, has been at *The Times* office, and there are stories that he has been seen by a high Cabinet official. Anyhow, the whole edition was held up waiting for the dramatic decision. When it came, it was seen that the Chief had been persuaded to change his mind. So we went to press happy—but three-quarters of an hour late.

Monday, August 17, 1914 : We have dropped publishing the Sunday editions. Some of our Scots subs are very gloomy about the war. “If it lasts till Christmas,” said one last night, “we shall certainly be on half salaries, and a few weeks after that we shall have to close down.” The advertisements have come down wallop, and we are running mainly an eight-page paper with one page of pictures—an innovation by the Chief—on the back page. All our small advertisements have been “scrapped.”

Tuesday, August 18, 1914 : George Curnock, who, the Chief tells me, is the best reporter Fleet Street ever had, sent from France to-day his dispatch describing the arrival of the British Expeditionary Force. It came by courier from Boulogne. George made great play of the soldier’s marching song, “It’s a long way to Tipperary,” and the Chief has given us orders to boom it, to print the music so that everybody shall know it. He says, thanks to Curnock’s genius, we shall soon have everybody singing it.

Monday, August 24, 1914: We printed Hamilton Fyfe's message about the retreat from Mons. It began "Would to God I had not to tell this story." It cast us and the country into the depths of gloom and anxiety. Later the Press Bureau issued a statement to reassure the public, and, in effect, to lay us of the *Mail* open to the suspicion of exaggeration. . . . Our newspaper rivals are baiting us for scaremongering. This evening the Chief said, "Was Fyfe's article submitted to the Press Bureau for censorship?" He was told that it was, and that F. E. Smith (afterwards Lord Birkenhead), who was the director of the Press Bureau, had called our representative there up to his room and had said that the statements in Fyfe's article were true, and had handed him a letter to the Editor to say that he had amended the article, as it was time the public knew the truth. Northcliffe said, "Have you that letter?" On being told that it had been kept, he said, "Print it." He was told it was private. "Print it," he repeated. "Give it to me." There was some demur, but he insisted. "I am not going to be attacked, when I am right, without retaliation." So the letter is published. Will F. E. ever forgive us?

Wednesday, August 26, 1914: Published first British casualties. Over 2,000. How enormous they seem, and the war is only beginning. Everybody talks about them in horrified whispers. . . . These are the casualties from the retreat described by Hamilton Fyfe. Curnock has

come back from Boulogne. "Good God, Clarke, if you had seen what I have seen, and talked with men who have escaped the awful slaughter, you would not be able to sit still there," he gasped. Marlowe says Curnock is too emotional and needs a rest. Amid all the tragedy there was an amusing side to Fyfe's story when it arrived by courier. Purser was deputising in the news room. He rang up Marlowe. "I've got Fyfe's story," he said, and began to read it as follows : "Would to God I had not to tell this story." Marlowe : "Oh, come on, Purser, what does Fyfe say?" Purser : "Would to God . . ." It was not till Marlowe had told Purser once or twice to pull himself together that the two realised their misunderstanding.

September 5, 1914 : A point arose the other day about Indian troops, and Lord Northcliffe condemned the sending of them to France. "It is a mistake. They are no good. They have never faced artillery." . . . There was also a question about an advertisement, and the Chief strenuously objected to the fear among the editorial people to refuse, or to throw out, an advertisement. "I do not like," he said, "these Byzantine genuflexions to advertisers." . . . With the Germans at the gates of Paris and the French Government at Bordeaux, our Paris edition has gone to that city also, and, as we cannot wire or telephone our news to France, the Chief has ordered it to be cabled to New York, to our correspondent Bullock there, and he

re-cables it to France over the French cable. We send hundreds of words nightly this 7,000 miles route in order that we may publish as usual from Bordeaux. Our war organisation is now in full swing. In addition to sending nearly a dozen of his young men to the different fronts and news centres, the Chief has engaged, at £1,000 a year for three years, a man who sent a good battle report through from France to a newsagency, and has commissioned Socialist Blatchford, who predicted it all, to write about the war in the *Weekly Dispatch* at handsome remuneration. The Chief is at our evening editorial conference almost every day.

September 6, 1914: The young man catching the Chief's eye at the moment is J. M. N. Jeffries. There is nothing of the temperament of the war correspondent about his fragile figure and nervy way. But he saw things in the great German sweep through Belgium, and some of his temperament he translated to his articles, and they are therefore of a nervous, vivid, yet scholarly style. He writes of things as he sees them. Jeffries is a Stonyhurst boy and a devout Catholic. He was discovered through his winning literary prizes in the *Westminster Gazette*, and has been on our staff little more than a year. Now we are printing his picture and his career by order of the Chief.

October 4, 1914: Army recruiting is the topic of the day, and to-night the Chief said, "I have seen the Government, and they asked me to work up a strong

recruiting campaign. I declined point-blank until our men (our correspondents at the front) are treated properly, and facilities given them to help recruiting by telling about our army. I can get 500,000 men, but I must do it my own way. They would not agree, so I refused point-blank. They want more vigour, more imagination, more organisation." Then he went on to discuss the general news. "Every day we must have a feature . . . something different . . . a surprise. As the Editor of the *Figaro* once said, 'Every day you must throw your pebble into the pond.'"

December 1, 1914 : Following Northcliffe's publication of a volume entitled *Scaremongerings from the Daily Mail, 1896-1914*, to justify his prophecy that there would be war with Germany, the Liberal Press, which he ruthlessly holds up to ridicule, is making heated reply. The *Star* to-night says, "Next to the Kaiser, Lord Northcliffe has done more than any other living man to bring about the war." I showed him the article, and he said, "It is what you may expect. It only shows how angry they are at being shown up. It is not worth taking any notice of."

February 1, 1915 : The Chief is going away for a time. For some days past he has been attacking the "pestilential optimism" of the paper about the war position. He says we must keep on killing the official lies that have created a false optimism among the British public.

April 12, 1915 : Back from a visit to France, the

A "DUD" SHELL

Chief to-night drove straight from Victoria to the office, followed by a taxicab containing a huge shell. He invited us all down to see it in the ante-room to the famous Room One on the first floor of Carmelite House. "See where it points," he said to Andrew Caird, pointing a finger towards the ceiling. "What will happen to you if it goes off?" Caird smiled feebly, for through the ceiling, in his room above, was his chair; exactly below, the nose of the huge 10-inch shell. "Don't let anyone near it," said Northcliffe, giving instructions that a "danger" notice was to be stuck on the shell. Later this evening, Caird came to my room and asked me to have the shell examined by an expert. We rang up the headquarters of the 3rd Field Artillery in City Road, and they asked us to send it along. So it was placed gingerly in a taxicab, and soon the reporter (W. R. Holt) who had undertaken the "dangerous" mission was back with his report. An officer and a sergeant took the shell to pieces, found that it was not charged, had been built up of several shell parts, and was, in fact, quite harmless. Caird received the news with a grim smile. "Don't tell the Chief I had the shell examined," he said. "I don't want to spoil his joke."

May, 1915 (undated): I am back from a few days' visit to France. Been getting the hang of the position regarding correspondents and couriers—the Chief being very angry at the way they are being harassed. We have

dozens of couriers. Met them everywhere—on the boat, Boulogne, Amiens, Senlis, Paris. At Boulogne the Scotland Yard man said to me, “ Oh—*Daily Mail* are you ? I’ve got one of your blokes over there I’m holding on instructions from London—Ward Price, know him ? ” “ Of course, he’s all right, I can assure you he is no spy. Can I talk with him ? ” “ Sure,” said the detective with that courtesy I have always experienced from Scotland Yard officials. So Ward Price and I had a drink together while the detective stood by keeping him under “ open arrest.” He was allowed to proceed later in the day.

May 16, 1915 : Northcliffe has been writing leading articles. “ Surely it is time,” he writes, “ we prepared a gas to help us advance into Germany ? ” He is nibbling at conscription and says our streets are full of young policemen not allowed to respond to Kitchener’s heart-breaking recruiting advertisements. To H. W. Wilson he said, “ I hear you are swanking about Fleet Street, being patted on the back for the excellent leaders which I write and don’t get paid for.” Of course, it is not true. Wilson is modesty itself. The other day the name of a well-known man of affairs cropped up, and one of the innumerable editors present said, “ But what a reputation he has ! ” “ What reputations you all have,” snapped the Chief. “ I would not give much for the record of any one of you—especially what has been said about you by each other.”

CHAPTER V

KITCHENER : THE "SHELL SCANDAL" : COMPULSION

So long as people remember the Great War, so long will they talk of Northcliffe's "shell scandal" onslaught on Kitchener, which led to the formation of Lloyd George's famous Ministry of Munitions in May 1915. Only nine months previously the cry had been, "The Nation Calls for Lord Kitchener" ; now it was, "Kitchener Must Go." I cannot pretend to tell the whole story from my diary. I did not know it. Others have given their versions at length, and I can only offer to fill in a gap here and there, thanks to occasional encounters at the time with Lord Northcliffe. Reports of the serious lack of high explosive shells at the front had been floating about Fleet Street for some time, and it was common knowledge that Northcliffe came back from his visits to Sir John French in France much impressed with the complaints about the shortage. There was, indeed, a story that Sir John had spent a week-end at Broadstairs with Northcliffe, and had told him that unless the War Office wakened up to the facts he (Sir John) would resign to come home and tell the public the truth.

On Friday, May 14, 1915, there appeared in *The Times* Colonel Repington's message that the proposed British advance near Ypres was stopped by our lack of high explosive shell—"a fatal bar to our success." Five days later, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, announced the intention to reconstruct the Government. Coalition was at hand. It was announced the same evening that Kitchener was not resigning. Next morning, by order of Northcliffe, the *Daily Mail* opened its thunderous attack on Kitchener—an attack that stunned the whole country. Many in Carmelite House were dismayed at what they felt was Northcliffe's foolish courage. My diary of a fateful night at Carmelite House reads :

May 20, 1915 : About 8 p.m., Caird, unusually late for him, looked into my room and said : "Have you read the leader ? We are going to break some windows to-morrow." I got a proof. The heading ran "The Tragedy of the Shells : Lord Kitchener's Grave Error." We are in the midst of a Government crisis. The Chief says conscription has nothing to do with it, that it's due to the shell shortage and the feud at the Admiralty between Winston Churchill and Lord Fisher. The Chief has been attacking the Government about the shell shortage through both *The Times* and the *Mail*. Last Friday's message from Repington to *The Times* is said to have been passed direct by Sir John French. Northcliffe says it is well known that Kitchener

preferred shrapnel, and had made tons of it, when any expert could have told him that it was no good for breaking down wire and trenches.

Meantime, conferences are afoot with a view to the formation of a Coalition Ministry. Many Unionist leaders are mentioned as likely to share the harness with Asquith and his men. Kitchener is not resigning. . . .

However, to get back to this fateful leader. Northcliffe this afternoon showed some anger at what he termed the "good hiding" the *Mail* was getting in the matter of news of the crisis at the hands of the *Daily News*, *Chronicle*, and *Express*. He went on, "It is a very big crisis, and we haven't got a man to get the news. I will go out to-night and get this thing *myself*. I know the list of new Ministers is ready now. The *Express* and *News* and *Chronicle* will have it to-morrow and we shall not. I will go and write something about it now, although I have been working since 5 o'clock this morning. We have put 100,000 on our circulation in six weeks. That's since I began writing the leaders—and there are very few returns, too."

And the result of his work is this leader, damning beyond recall the nation's idol, Kitchener. In the news columns the headings to the attack on Kitchener are bolder still: "THE SHELLS SCANDAL: LORD KITCHENER'S TRAGIC BLUNDER: OUR TERRIBLE CASUALTY LISTS: CAUSE OF THE CABINET CRISIS." . . .

Before he left the office the Chief turned to other

things, and had a rap at Hannen Swaffer, Editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, for what he called snobbish articles about Asquith and Kennerly Rumford, who, in last Sunday's *Dispatch*, had been "reluctantly" interviewed. The Chief hated that sort of thing, and to say in print that we had been "granted" an interview made him very angry. "I do not like," he said, "this atmosphere of the Press Club and the servants' hall." It is not usual for the Chief to criticise Swaffer. He seems rather fond of him—probably because Swaffer stands up to him. He says Swaffer is a genius, and has nicknamed him 'Poet.' Swaffer was formerly Northcliffe's big man on the *Mirror*, which he certainly put on the map ("And I only got fifteen guineas a week," he says), and when he was doing nothing, not long ago, Northcliffe brought him back to the fold. The Chief rang me up about it and said: "I am bringing Swaffer back. You know him, don't you? Many people in Carmelite House will not like it, but I do not care. He has done good work for me. He is a genius in his own line—probably he is as mad as all geniuses are. He has been tamed a bit by adversity, and I am going to help him. He will be of the greatest value. Many people don't like him. That's because he has brains. He will be able to help you all a great deal. Of course, he ought not to have too long a chain." Swaffer comes into our conferences, and is very independent in his views. There was a war picture the Chief wanted treating in a certain way. "I do not agree, Chief," said

Swaffer. We waited for the rebuke, but all the Chief said was, "I defer to the Poet; he *knows*. He has more brains than anyone in this room—except *me*."

May 21, 1915 : The Chief's comment on the paper this morning, when his leader attacking Kitchener fell like a bombshell on amazed England, was that the verbose author of the leading article looked like getting the paper into trouble. He certainly does. All day the telephones have been buzzing with protests from readers, and intimations that they will never buy our "damned rag" again. The view of people in the office is that the Chief did not realise last night the size of the gun he was firing. Hundreds of abusive letters and telegrams are coming in. A bank manager telephoned me to-night to say that all his staff had agreed to buy the *Daily Mail* no more, and he had rung up the *Daily Express* telling the editor to print 50,000 more papers for people who would drop the *Mail*. Copies of *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* were burned on the Stock Exchange this afternoon. The evening papers castigate us furiously. There is some alarm that public feeling may boil over, and so to-night there is a special police guard at Carmelite House, and all the gates are locked. . . . At five o'clock we sat awaiting the Chief. Wearing a blue suit, a green slouch hat, and chewing the end of a big cigar, he came quietly in and, dropping into an easy chair, said, "I have thrown off another string of pearls for you to-day. . . . What's the news?" When the *Star* and other papers

attacking him were produced, also the report of the Stock Exchange burnings, he threw them aside and said, "That shows they don't know the truth. Why, even to-day General French has told Asquith that, if things don't improve, he will leave his job to come to England and stump the country to acquaint the people with the true state of affairs at the front."

May 25, 1915 : Several stories from officers at the front supporting Northcliffe's allegations *re* shell shortage having been refused publication by the censors at the Press Bureau, the Chief has given instructions that we must not submit them to the Censor. When it was pointed out that we might be trapped on a technical point, he said, "I have been threatened so much in the past few weeks that I do not mind now. Send all these censored proofs to Lloyd George and Curzon. They know the truth, and it will let them see how the Press Bureau is keeping it back." . . . Frederick William Wile, formerly our Berlin correspondent, also mentioned an American business man who had come over to see our Foreign Office people, and had gone back in a temper because he could not get Downing Street to hustle. "Why didn't you bring him to me?" said the Chief. "*We can get things done.* What these people in Downing Street loath is publicity."

* * *

Meanwhile the Liberal War Government had come to an end to make way for the Asquith-Bonar Law

Coalition. By friend and foe, Northcliffe was credited with the fall of the Government. His supporters praised him for it; others, like A. G. Gardiner, said the dictatorship of this "Mad Dervish" had been allowed to go too far. Certainly it is meet to interpose here the challenging statement of Lord Beaverbrook in his *Politicians and the War* that Lord Northcliffe's "shell scandal" campaign had nothing whatever to do with the fall of the Liberal Government. He contends that the Government fell solely because of the dissensions at the Admiralty between Mr. Churchill (First Lord) and Lord Fisher (First Sea Lord), which culminated in the latter's resignation. He says that Northcliffe was not aware of what was happening in the inner political ring, and that the Liberal Government was dead as early as Monday, May 17, when Bonar Law wrote a formal letter announcing the decision of his colleagues to take part in the Government precisely because of what had happened at the Admiralty.

Lord Beaverbrook's authoritative and documented evidence leaves no doubt in one's mind about the actual and immediate cause of the Government's downfall, but the shells campaign had created the atmosphere that made it possible. Although I think Northcliffe knew more of what was going on than Lord Beaverbrook gives him credit for, he was at sea among the politicians and did not know enough. There is no doubt that at this time, and for some time before, his mind had been on

shells. There is no evidence that at this period he wanted to see the Government destroyed. He had criticised it heavily, but what he avowedly wanted was a Ministry of Munitions, with Lloyd George at the head of it. Whether or not he had a vague instinct that something else was afoot among the politicians of which he was uninformed I do not know, but I do recollect that he was driving the news staff hard on the question of political news. His remarks already quoted (May 20) indicate that he was somewhat "rattled" at not knowing what was going on. Perhaps he was realising the handicap of his non-political mind. Politicians and their ways stimulated in him the profoundest contempt. He was never comfortable among them, and seldom got under their skin. He was undoubtedly jealous of their atmosphere of authority and knowledge.

There are only two entries in my diary which might be offered as contributions to this interesting Beaverbrook-Northcliffe controversy.

The first is on May 17, 1915 (three days *after* Lord Fisher's resignation had been handed in, and the day when Bonar Law decided to take part in the Government). It runs: "Northcliffe said to-night, 'I don't want to be away to-morrow. There will be big news.' " He gave no further hint than that.

I recollect the eagerness with which we approached the morrow, and when, on that day (May 18), the resignation of Lord Fisher was announced, we were all

surprised, and told each other, "That's what the Chief meant." I remember seeing Northcliffe, and this is what my diary says :

May 18, 1915 : Lord Fisher, First Sea Lord, resigned. Northcliffe says "Fisher wanted the *Queen Elizabeth* recalled from the Dardanelles for fear of Austrian submarines. Winston Churchill disagreed, and eventually overruled Fisher. This was the climax of their friction, and Fisher sent his resignation to the Prime Minister."

* * *

That's all. No word as to whether or not this was the "big news" we were to expect on May 18. Two days later Northcliffe's real attack on Kitchener boiled over.

* * *

May 27, 1915 : Hundreds of letters pour in daily protesting against the Kitchener attack. One letter to-day contained the ashes of the *Daily Mail*. We are banned on 'Change, in the Oxford Union, in many public libraries and clubs. The Radical Press, led by the *Daily News*, with A. G. Gardiner and Arnold Bennett serving the guns, are firing at us all the time. "We are getting a lot of free advertising from competing newspapers," is the comment of Northcliffe. Up to date, the Kitchener attack has cost us some 60,000 papers, but, as we had put on 100,000 for no apparent reason whatever in the last few weeks, the loss is not felt. To-day the Chief returns to the attack. He writes the "splash." It

is headed, "TRUTH *WILL* OUT : THE SHELL SCANDAL." The article quotes Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Rutland, Bishop Furse, and statements from returned officers and others—all on the lamentable effects of the shortage of high explosive shells.

* * *

Whatever the view of posterity may be about this shells campaign, there can be no gainsaying that Northcliffe pursued it with great tenacity and courage. In July 1915, by which time the sale of his paper had leapt up to 1,100,000, there was a party at the Ritz to celebrate his fiftieth birthday, and he told the assembled directors and chiefs of staffs of his various undertakings that he was going on with the fight, and that if any of those present did not feel like going through with it under his leadership, now was the time for them to quit. He said his papers had been burned on the Stock Exchange ; maybe they would burn Carmelite House next. He did not care. He had other plant and resources. They would have to destroy him or supply the troops with shells. Every farthing of his personal fortune was going into this struggle. He was liable to be ruined. He warned them of that ; and again said those who could not go all the way with him should quit now.

The advent of Lloyd George's restless administration at the Ministry of Munitions soon altered the outlook. Our office talk was that Northcliffe had got L. G. in his pocket. Kitchener's glory was dimming ; and

there was a "now we are getting on with the war" atmosphere about Northcliffe and his ways. But his thoughts were not all of the war. I often felt that there were many moments when he took the detached view of a reporter of this biggest human story. In short, he was a journalist rather than a statesman. In the details of his newspaper he still revelled, and I find at this period more references in my diary to newspaper than to war matters. He would complain of our "obscurities"; of talking about the Isonzo without explaining it, since, to the ordinary reader, it might be an Italian tenor or a musical instrument; he grew more keen on pictures, complaining that we looked upon them merely as a side-show.

There were signs towards the end of 1915 that if the war went on, compulsion was likely. Northcliffe had been campaigning heavily that single men should go first, and when, on November 12, the Government decided in favour of this, he wrote a short leader recalling how he had refused to print the recruiting advertisements for married men. A few weeks later he began the attack on the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith). I took down from him in shorthand the fateful leading article—but let my diary tell the story:

December 28, 1915: Last night, about 6 o'clock, I was requested to "go down to his lordship at St. James's Place, get the news, and be ready to bring a leader back." I drove down in the Chief's Rolls-Royce with

Montague Smith, our Lobby correspondent, and Lovat Fraser, *The Times* leader-writer. I wondered what was afoot as we rode through the dismally dark streets—the Zeppelin menace has made London a mediæval city again—along almost deserted Pall Mall to the little cul-de-sac of aristocracy in St. James's Place. We pulled up at No. 22. . . . Fraser had the Chief to himself in the library for a few moments, and then Smith and I were summoned. It appeared that a sudden crisis on the question of compulsion had arisen following Asquith's pledge that single men would have to go first. "I will give you the news," said the Chief to Smith, "and you can go and dress it up in your own way." "I have an appointment at 7 o'clock to-night with Lloyd George," said Smith. "There is no need for you to trouble Lloyd George," said the Chief. "I have got the news. . . . Compulsion is near. Lloyd George has sent a note to Asquith—before the Cabinet meeting—that if Asquith does not keep his pledge to the married men and send the single men first, he (L. G.) will resign. . . . Another meeting of the Cabinet is to be held to-morrow to settle the matter. There is division of opinion on the following lines. . . . Now, go and make what you can of that. . . ." In that snug little room at the top of the winding, heavy oak staircase the Chief talked to me as Smith hurried back to Carmelite House. He sat in one pink easy chair, I in another. A log fire flickered in a big open grate. Pink

was the note of the room, except for a whole side of bookshelves let into the wall, largely taken up with bound volumes of *Blackwood's Magazine* and a round mahogany table with ash-tray and boxes of cigars. A small window-desk was covered with papers and a reporter's penny notebook. "Now for the leader," said the Chief. "Put these headings: "ONLY A SCRAP OF PAPER: THE WORD OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND. . . ." The tinkle of the telephone bell interrupted. Northcliffe took up the receiver. "I was just ringing up to give you the news," he said; "great Cabinet crisis . . . oh, about compulsion. . . . A rare old bust-up. . . . Yes, it will come to a head to-morrow, when they meet to toe the line. . . . I shall know the result about one o'clock, I suppose. . . . Yes, I'm at St. James's Place. Brumwell (of *The Times*) is coming to dine with me, and then I shall go out to my mother. . . . Fare thee well." Some member of his family, no doubt. It seemed to me that Northcliffe was an enthusiastic young reporter again, proud to have his own folk know of his success with a story. How very human he seemed at that moment. He revealed to me the very essence of his nature—his boyish egotism and his pride of power. Like a king in mufti, he sat there in his pink chair surrounded by telephone bells—a hidden force behind the scenes of this vast London. . . . He resumed the leader. . . . "The crisis has been brought about by the suggestion—the odious suggestion—of some of

these (Hide the Truth) journals that the Prime Minister of England should break his pledges to the married men." When it was done, I read my notes to him. He made a few alterations and then said quickly, "What do you think of it? I don't think it's very good. It's what you call in Fleet Street rather tripy, isn't it? . . . But I know you won't say so. You know I would sack you if you did." "I don't believe you would do anything of the kind," I said. "Don't you be too sure," he chuckled. "Have a cigar." I took one and cut it to light up. "No, don't do that," said the Chief. "That's too good a cigar to smoke out of doors. Put it in your pocket and take this to smoke now." And he handed me a small cheroot.

Wednesday, December 29, 1915 : The news in yesterday's paper about the compulsion crisis and L. G.'s threat to resign caught the rest of the newspapers unprepared, but there is great liveliness now in Fleet Street. Last night, when I entered Carmelite House eager to know the result of the momentous Cabinet meeting, Fish whispered to me, "Compulsion." The Chief had telephoned the news through. Later he sent Smith to Reginald McKenna (Chancellor of the Exchequer) to present him with Lord Northcliffe's compliments and the hope that he would not resign. When Smith came back I said, "What did McKenna say?" "He just asked me to thank Lord Northcliffe." . . .

January 18, 1916 : The Chief is getting quite a

number of threatening letters because of his compulsion campaign. One received to-day reads, "Warning to Lord Northcliffe. . . . If the compulsion Bill is passed you are a DEAD man. I and another half-dozen young men have made a pledge—that is, to shoot you like a dog. We know where to find you. . . . BEWARE."

January 20, 1916: Northcliffe is on the warpath about what he calls the intentionally misleading dispatches from British G.H.Q. Last night he rang up and dictated a little account of the successes of the Germans with their Fokker aeroplanes. I don't know where he got it from. Five minutes later we got a story from the Press correspondent at G.H.Q. praising our airmen for having got the upper hand of the Fokkers, two of which were reported to have been brought down. "Don't print it," the Chief said. "It isn't true." And to-day he congratulates the *Mail* on being the only paper that saw the real meaning of the G.H.Q. dispatch, the net result of which, he said, was that we had lost two 'planes.

January 26, 1916: We published a three-column "splash" this morning headed "THE MAN WHO DINED WITH THE KAISER." The Chief handled it himself. It appears that some time ago he sent a secret agent—a Dutchman I understand—to follow the Kaiser to Constantinople. This gentleman reports on his return that he was present at a banquet given by King Ferdinand to the Kaiser at Nish on January 18.

MAN WHO DINED WITH KAISER

The Chief has been closely closeted with the Dutchman, and has himself extracted a story which he describes as "one of the most remarkable journalistic achievements of the war." As well as writing up the story, Northcliffe also wrote a leader on it.

CHAPTER VI

THE U.S.A. AND THE WAR

It seemed to us at this time that Northcliffe had attained a position of extraordinary power in the land. Although one never heard him boasting, his bearing suggested that he believed he had saved England from the follies of incompetent government in the conduct of the war. He paraded the stage with his "big stick," whacking out right and left, and dusting the pants of any leader or would-be leader who earned his displeasure. His "campaigns" up to date had certainly met with remarkable success. He had scored his first hit by getting Kitchener at the War Office. He had said racing must be stopped, and it was. He had said the "shell scandal" must be put right by the formation of a Ministry, and the Munitions Ministry was formed under Lloyd George ; he had said there must be a national register, and there was ; he had said cotton must be stopped from going into Germany, and it was. He had said single men must go first, and it was so. He had demanded a smaller Cabinet to get on with the war, and a special War Council of the Cabinet had been set up ; he had demanded machine-guns, and

Asquith went over to France and agreed. And now he had got compulsion.

His big disappointment was the attitude towards the war of the United States as expressed through the head of its Government, President Wilson. There had been the awful affair of the *Lusitania*, and all Britain talking angrily of the country that was "too proud to fight." There had been interminable niggling Notes from Washington asking us to do things like adopting the Declaration of London, which would have tied our hands in our warfare on contraband and German shipping. Northcliffe was distressed by the Americans' attitude. It seemed as if they meant to secure food and supplies for the Germans. But, because his inclinations were always friendly towards the American nation, and also because he knew we could not afford to drive them to open support of the other side, he maintained a quiet and judicial frame of mind, personally and in his newspapers. He was disheartened, though, and a little afraid of the uncertain outlook. We ran a strong campaign against our "sham blockade." The inspiration was Marlowe's, and Northcliffe never seemed enthusiastic about it. He knew it irritated the United States. We took from him the cue to be careful and restrained in what we printed about America or the Americans in all matters, big or little. For instance, there is an entry in my diary about this time as follows :

"To-night, a fat, prosperous-looking American

came to the office with his wife, and asked me to set all our organisation at work to help him find his dog, which had strayed from the Savoy. I wondered if he knew there was a war on. We were busy with the news of the great German attack on Verdun. The American had with him a policeman from Bow Street, whose advice he had sought about his lost dog. I said I really doubted very much whether we could put in a paragraph asking if anybody had found it. The American said he and his wife had been to a theatre, and, on returning to the Savoy, had taken the dog out for a run and it had disappeared—‘ a great motor-car came up and scared the pore little dog, and he scampered off. Gee-whiz ! The da-amned searchlights frightened him sure ! Can’t Lord Northcliffe’s paper find him ? ’ ”

That was a priceless “ story,” which in other circumstances might have been printed as a revelation of American mentality when all Europe was in travail. When I told Northcliffe about it, he looked rather grim and said, “ You were quite right not to print anything.” There was an occasion later in the year when he showed no compunction in hitting out at similar lack of perspective on the part of some of his own countrymen. “ I see,” he said acidly on the telephone one morning, “ that the most important item of war news to-day is the opening of a pet dog-show at Lambeth Baths. Send a photographer to take pictures of the people going into the show and get a list of all the

distinguished people there. It is a sin to have a dog show in wartime. The dogs will consume 500 lbs. of meat a day. The whole thing is a waste of time."

In the early part of 1916, another of the politicians came in for Northcliffe's "big stick"—Lord Derby, author of the Group Scheme of military service, and described as "The Fat Man" in the code the Chief sometimes employed when communicating with us about personalities. Gossip in the inner circle was that Northcliffe was annoyed that Lord Derby was going to be spirited away to the Air Department, thus escaping the storm that was brewing about his recruiting scheme. "He must not be allowed to escape his responsibility," said Northcliffe, who invented a method of prodding Lord Derby which must have been peculiarly annoying. He printed advice daily that all attested married men and others complaining about the calling up of married men before the "single slackers in starred jobs" should send their complaints, not to the *Daily Mail*, but to Lord Derby, whose address was published prominently. On receiving these complaints, no doubt by the truckload, Lord Derby made plaintive representations to Carmelite House. Northcliffe was away in Verdun at the time, and something in the nature of a whitewashing article about Derby got into the paper, apparently much to Northcliffe's chagrin. For, on his return at the end of March (1916), he started a campaign against "The Derby Shuffle."

A day or two later the resignation of Lord Derby (together with Lord Montagu) from the Air Committee was announced, and there was talk of Lord Curzon as Lord Derby's successor. On this, Northcliffe's comment was : " Knife him if he gets in the way."

Northcliffe had returned from Verdun rather more optimistic than usual. He had caused his 5,000-word description of the battle to be telegraphed world wide, and I remember seeing him for a fleeting moment when he waved his hand and said, " It's all right." He had also " taken up " Mr. W. M. Hughes, the virile little Welshman, Prime Minister of Australia, who was in England making some very live and outspoken speeches. He had Hughes out at dinner one night, and it was no surprise a few days later to find Hughes being pushed forward as a very necessary delegate at the forthcoming Economic Conference of the Allies in Paris. The suggestion was supposed to be not palatable to Mr. Asquith, who announced that he understood Mr. Hughes would have left the country before the date of the conference. Northcliffe was not having this, and he reached for his " big stick " again to apply it to Asquith. He got Hughes to state in reply that the date of his departure had not been fixed ; and on April 7 he said, " Hughes is going to the conference. I have fixed it up with Bonar Law." The next day it was announced that the difficulties in the way of

Mr. Hughes going to the conference "have been removed" ; and later a telegram from our Sydney correspondent was published stating that " the invitation to Mr. Hughes is generally recognised as a triumph for the British Press, which has forced the hands of a reluctant Ministry frightened by the absence of a precedent."

Friday, April 28, 1916 : What a week ! On Wednesday the budget of vital news—such of it as we were permitted by the Censor to print—was summed up by the Chief as " the biggest in history." It included : (1) The Irish Revolt ; (2) Secret Session of Parliament ; (3) German Fleet off Lowestoft ; (4) Zeppelin raids in Essex and Kent ; (5) British air raid on German aerodrome at Mariakerke ; (6) Arrival of Sir Roger Casement in London under arrest from Ireland, where he had gone from Germany in a submarine with 30,000 rifles for the rebels.

The descriptions of events in Ireland have only been released for publication to-night, although much of the information has been in our possession all week. The news about Casement's arrest, for instance, was known to us last Sunday—the day when he was brought from Ireland to Brixton Gaol. Incidentally, the officer who escorted him has been staying next door to me in Dulwich, and I knew nothing of that until to-day—a " scoop " unknown waiting next door ! When last Sunday we heard about Casement's arrest, we at once

recalled other strange news from Ireland. There had been the seizure of a small collapsible boat with rifles in Tralee Bay on the previous Friday morning. There had been the capture of a "mysterious stranger" at the same time. Beattie, our Night Editor, felt sure these and other news items from Ireland were connected with each other, and indicated an uprising of the Sinn Feiners. He communicated his suspicions to the Censor, with the suggestion that the Intelligence Department should be informed. We sent Charles Hands off to Ireland by the Sunday night mail, but he was held up at Holyhead. Events had moved quickly, and Dublin was isolated. Other men were rushed to all possible stepping-off places for Ireland—Harold Ashton and George Curnock to Fishguard, Basil Clarke (later Sir Basil) to Holyhead, Robert Segar to Stranraer, Slater to Crewe, to meet mail trains for news and telephone it to our London and Manchester offices. It was not until Thursday night—last night—that Basil Clarke got through with first direct and independent narratives from the Irish capital. He had got through to Dublin, seen things, and secured his facts, and hopped out again on the first mail-boat for Holyhead, to telephone his story to London. There were four columns of it, but we were not allowed to publish it—not until to-night for to-morrow's paper. It has been augmented by a fine story from our Belfast correspondent, Shaw. He had sent us word that he

would not be allowed to telegraph us news, so we wired him to bring it to London himself. To-night his wife walked into my room. Her husband had been unable to get away, so she had acted as his courier and had brought a three-column story via Ardrossan and Glasgow. In publishing these first independent messages from Ireland after six days of secrecy, we protest against the suppression of news, and point out the evils of the suggested control of newspapers by Government. Incidentally, the Censor the other night knocked out of our proofs a paragraph asking whether the Irish disturbances would ever have taken the form they did had we been permitted to publish the news which was in our possession last Sunday. The Chief is irritated, as we all are, at this gagging and mistrust of the Press, especially as the Government appears to adopt the attitude that they had no warning. Our would-be-helpful hints to the authorities on Sunday night as to our interpretation of the various items of news from Ireland were received with very cold courtesy, as if the whole business was no affair of ours. Then there has been the secret session of Parliament—Tuesday and Wednesday. That was to discuss the recruiting problem. An Order in Council was issued completely gagging us. As if this were not enough, a police officer called at this and all other newspaper offices on both nights of the secret session and requested us to furnish him with a copy of the paper immediately it was printed. This,

he told me, was by order of the Commissioner of Police, presumably acting for the Home Office.

The Chief is keeping in the background amid all this. He hardly ever comes to our conferences. Last Tuesday he said to a member of the staff, who went to see him at his London house, "Did you notice anything unusual in the hall as you came in?" "No," was the reply. "What, did you not see the tall hat I have resurrected for the secret session?" He has never yet spoken in the House of Lords, much to the chagrin of our Radical friends, who think he ought to say what he has to say there, and not only in his newspapers, where his critics cannot hit back. They have been giving him much roasting lately, and Lloyd George too, with whom they are angry because he is obviously heading for a serious collision with Asquith, and thus playing Northcliffe's game. They call for "national unity," and Northcliffe says that what they mean by that is everybody agreeing with the Radicals. He says there's Ireland in revolt, Kut on the eve of falling, no "big push" ready on the western front, the Army calling for more men, and amid all this Asquith holds on to office and says, "Wait and see." A. G. Gardiner, the Editor of the *Daily News*, writes articles which slash both Northcliffe and Lloyd George almost frantically. Friends of mine at the *Daily News* tell me he literally takes off his coat to write them—a crusader in shirt-sleeves.

Monday, May 1, 1916 : The Chief congratulates us all on our scoring with the news from Ireland, full details of which we were not allowed to publish until Saturday, but he thinks it a lack of perspective to give pages about Ireland and only a few lines to the plight of Townshend's army in Kut, where we have lost as prisoners hundreds of officers and thousands of men. He blames the Government for not letting fuller reports of the disaster appear, and again protests against journalism being controlled by Government.

* * *

On the last day of May 1916 came the great naval battle of Jutland. From the journalistic point of view the Chief was ready to congratulate us on the admirable presentation of the sea-battle news, but one gathered that he felt there was danger of exaggerating its importance in relation to the general progress of war. In the days that followed Jutland, he expressed approval of the prominence we gave to the military situation at Ypres and Verdun. He was now convinced that the cry of "Victory" at Jutland had been overdone anyhow, and he said we must get our perspective right—and that perspective should prominently include Ypres and Verdun. Jutland had taken the public mind away from the real perspective of the war. He was afraid Ypres and Verdun might both fall, after which there would be an immense peace campaign by

Germany. That he regarded as a grave danger, especially in view of the American official attitude. It was about this time that Northcliffe spoke to me about the German Press attacks on him. The Germans had now fully realised his power and significance, and the more his campaigns for rigorous war-making succeeded, the harder they knew it was going to be for them. They knew he was all out for victory and that he would oppose premature peace schemes ; that he, with the influence he now had with those in power in London, would be a most formidable opponent to any "peace without victory" proposals coming via America or anywhere else. This was probably the explanation of the anti-Northcliffe violence of the German Press.

Their attacks greatly tickled Northcliffe. One day he sent me a clipping from the *Cologne Gazette* saying that when Asquith and Lloyd George came to the judgment seat, Christ would say, "Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did," but that, when Northcliffe came, Christ would look the other way. On July 9, German aeroplanes came over the coast near his house "Elmwood," Broadstairs. He rang me up and said : "They always come when I am there." But he did not like the subject, and turned the conversation to our letter column, in which he told me there were too many unsigned letters. "The public believe they are written up in the office," he said.

STORY THE KING ENJOYED

September, 1916 (undated) : A story comes from Germany via Holland about the King hiding in his cellar during Zeppelin raids. We are wondering what to do about it when the Censor rings up. The telegram has, of course, passed through his office, and it must have been referred to Buckingham Palace, for he says : " There is no objection to your publishing the story." He explains that our natural feelings of delicacy might produce some objection on our part to publication, but he indicates that the King enjoyed reading the story immensely, and would not at all mind seeing it in print.

When I told this story to the Chief during a telephone talk to-day he laughed and said, " Of course, you know that the King is one of our ' constant readers,' as you Fleet Street folk call them. He reads us first."

CHAPTER VII

NORTHCLIFFE, ASQUITH, AND
LLOYD GEORGE

TOWARDS the end of 1916 came the crisis which swept Mr. Asquith away. After the tragic death of Kitchener in June he could not resist the pressure to make Lloyd George War Minister. Northcliffe's closeness to the man he called "the little wizard from Wales" was no secret, but the foundations of the "alliance," even then, seemed to some of us rather less than secure.

October 12, 1916: The Chief is getting a bit restive about Lloyd George. He thinks L. G. is getting too friendly with Winston Churchill, whom he will not forgive for what he calls the Antwerp and Gallipoli blunders, and he is telling us to drive into the public mind the fact that political interference means increasing the death-roll of our army. The Chief sent Monty Smith to see Lloyd George a few days ago to present Lord Northcliffe's compliments and to say that he (L. G.) was too much in the company of Winston. Smith waited four hours but did not see L. G. Next morning the Chief said: "Never wait four hours for any man. The best thing to do now is to keep away from him for a time."

October 27, 1916 : By order of the Chief we printed this morning a nice tribute to C. P. Scott, Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. This is a curious change-over, for not many weeks ago we were roundly "strafed" for quoting the *Guardian*. Northcliffe on that occasion said that a paper with a relatively small circulation had no right to be quoted for information in our paper, as it was just a free advertisement for them worth untold money.

November 7, 1916 : H. G. Wells's novel, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, has attracted Northcliffe, and he says he is anxious for a good review, so he has got young Clifton Robbins (of our leader page staff) to ask Wells to nominate a man to do the job—"someone who *knows* Wells's work." . . . It is a new departure, surely, to ask a novelist to select his own reviewer. Wells, of course, has politely declined.

* * *

About this time I was again told to keep our political correspondent away from Lloyd George until further notice. I could not guess what was in the wind, and these suggestions of rifts became a still greater mystery when, before the year was out, we were putting down all the red carpet and blowing loud all the trumpets to hail Lloyd George, the new Prime Minister. The secret history of those days, and the parts played by various leaders of politics and the Press, have been

recorded elsewhere. I can only throw sidelights by quoting my diary of those fateful days :

December 2, 1916 : We are on the eve of another crisis. Last night I found myself once more in that cosy little room at St. James's Place. Northcliffe was talking to Humphrey Davy, one of his secretaries, as I entered. "There's Lord Fisher's letter to answer . . ." Davy was saying, but the Chief snapped out, "It can wait. I am in a hurry. I am going to my mother's. Time is short." He looked across the room at me—over the top of great black-rimmed spectacles—like a somewhat benevolent mandarin.

"I thought you were dead," he said.

"Dead?" I echoed.

"Killed," he said. "I thought there were no young men left."

"I am not to blame for that, Chief. I am not here because——"

"No, my boy," he interrupted. "Now what about this leader for to-morrow." He asked me to be seated while he revised it. "Longwinded," he muttered, leaning back in his pink chair. Then, "I want the word 'Government' in quotes all the way through this article," he said, repeating himself, as is his habit, and lifting his voice at the end of the sentence, not in the Welsh way, but with some peculiar intonation that invests his talk with unforgettable charm. "And I want it extra leaded. We don't understand the use of extra

leads in English newspapers." Another glance through the leader, and then, "The heading is to be 'THE SLACKERS: A NATIONAL DANGER.' And the contents bill is to be 'ASQUITH A NATIONAL DANGER.' That will shake them up. It will make things lively for you tomorrow. The police will be after you all. Let Mr. Marlowe have my instructions, and you quite understand it is important and must be strongly handled."

As I rode through the dark West End streets and along the Embankment to Carmelite House those words "ASQUITH A NATIONAL DANGER" rang in my ears. I marvelled at the audacity of a man who dared placard the length and breadth of England thus. . . But once again Marlowe appears to have put the brake on the Chief's impetuosity. He altered the leader headings to "THE LIMPETS: A NATIONAL DANGER" and the contents bill to "THE LIMPETS." In to-day's *Daily News* A. G. Gardiner writes of "the colossal vanity of this neurotic child Northcliffe," and adds, "If the present Government falls, it will fall because Lord Northcliffe decreed that it should fall, and the Government that takes its place, no matter who compose it, will enter on its task as the tributary of Lord Northcliffe." . . To-day Asquith saw the King. Our sister journal, the *Evening News*, has some inspired talk about a plot to keep Asquith in office. Lloyd George is said to be packing up at the War Office

December 3, 1916: To-night the following official

notice was issued. "The Prime Minister, with a view to the most effective prosecution of the war, has decided to advise His Majesty the King to consent to a reconstruction of the Government." . . . The Chief returned to town after visiting his mother in the country, and at 7 o'clock he was at the War Office with Lloyd George. . . . I hear that four days ago the Chief cabled to an American journalist—"L. G. Wins."

December 4, 1916: It is a remarkable thing that Northcliffe always seems to be near his mother in times of stress. He was with her yesterday afternoon. Then he came to town, saw L. G., and then wrote a two-column article on the political crisis. The burden of it is that there must be a small War Council consisting of Lloyd George, Carson, Bonar Law, and possibly Arthur Henderson. Asquith, the Prime Minister, is to be left "free to devote himself to other matters." Lloyd George will resign "unless the more vigorous method of war administration suggested is introduced." Northcliffe went out again to-night to his mother's place in Hertfordshire. "She is a wonderful woman," he told me. "Irish—and the only one who can keep me in my place. She *can* 'tell me off' when she wishes."

Tuesday, December 5, 1916: The news from Rumania is worse, and our marines have marched out of Athens under Greek escort. These things are helping Northcliffe's campaign to discredit the Government. His contents bill yesterday was "POOR LITTLE RUMANIA."

He says Lloyd George is still sticking to his demand for his War Council of four, and that Bonar Law is with him.

Wednesday, December 6, 1916 : Things came to a head last night and Asquith resigned. And our shout to-day across the splash page is, "BRAVO ! LLOYD GEORGE." The King sent for Bonar Law last night. Our private information is that Lloyd George is willing to serve under anybody who is out to win the war, and that Bonar Law is his nominee for the leadership of the new Ministry. We print to-day pictures of Lloyd George and Asquith side by side. "Get a smiling picture of Lloyd George," said the Chief, "and underneath it put the caption 'Do It Now,' and get the worst possible picture of Asquith and label it 'WAIT AND SEE.' "

He asked me what I thought of this : "It's rather—unkind, to say the least, isn't it ? " I said. "Nothing of the sort," he said. "Rough methods are needed if we are not to lose this war . . . it's the only way. This Haldane gang has dragged the country into a dangerous mess."

Other inspired headings to-day are : "Germans Fear Lloyd George : France Wants Him : The Empire Trusts Him."

Thursday, December 7, 1916 : The Court Circular announced last night that Bonar Law had been unable to form an administration and that Lloyd George had undertaken to form one.

BEATING HIS OWN DRUM

Friday, December 8, 1916 : Lloyd George has "kissed hands" and is now Prime Minister and forming a national Government with the help of Bonar Law. The *Daily News* yesterday, in its game of Cabinet making, gave a job to Northcliffe in the new Government. His comment to me was, "Ah-h, wouldn't they like to get me out of Fleet Street ! It would ease the pressure on their papers. Would not they like it ? I prefer to sit in Printing House Square and Carmelite House."

Monday, December 11, 1916 : Lloyd George's political coup is over, and to-day the list of his War Cabinet of five and his Ministry is published. Northcliffe is not satisfied at the inclusion of Balfour as Foreign Minister and Lord Robert Cecil as Minister of Blockade. Since Thursday last, when he heard they were to remain, he has been on their tracks. . . . He is also beating his own drum to some purpose. In Friday's *Mail*, for instance, under the heading "LORD NORTHCLIFFE ON MR. LLOYD GEORGE : ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR EIGHTY MILLION READERS," we read that in Sunday's *Weekly Dispatch* will appear a cable by Northcliffe specially written "by request for the 800 newspapers of the United Press of America and Canada and 120 journals of the United Cable Service of Australia." The article gives a flattering pen-picture of L. G. at work during the past historic week. It is reprinted in *The Times* and *Daily Mail* to-day, with the added information that the article was telegraphed to nearly 1,000 journals in the

United States, Canada, Australasia, France, Italy, South America. On Saturday's picture page of the *Mail*, under the heading "THE PASSING OF THE FAILURES," were pictures of outgoing Ministers, with contemptuous slogans attached. I have heard this feature much condemned, and, I feel, rightly so, but Northcliffe, who inspired it, congratulates the picture department on its excellent pillory. He says there is a plot against Lloyd George ; that the Whips are alleged to have carried off the cash, and that it should be shown up. To-night the Chief rang me up about some point I could not explain, and said, "Ring up Lloyd George and ask him. You have his telephone number. Give him my compliments, and tell him I told you to. Ring him up any time on vital matters." I heard a story to-night in connection with the agitation for the return of Lord Fisher to the Admiralty. Northcliffe sent to Fisher a copy of Bacon's *Essays*, with the one on "Youth and Old Age" marked, with the references to old age underlined. Fisher sent for our naval correspondent and asked him what the b—— h—— it all meant. The correspondent said he did not know, and advised Fisher to return the book to Northcliffe. This Fisher did, and in turn underlined all the references in the essay to youth.

* * *

Friday, December 14, 1916: Yesterday the Germans put forth their peace proposals. . . . Apparently Lloyd

George got into power in the nick of time, for the Chief thinks there was danger of "the old gang" being trapped into looking at these impudent proposals. He tells me we are now at the most serious turn of the war since August, 1914. He wants to know why the Royal Automobile Club building is not requisitioned. "Rub it in about the swimming baths there," he says. "It is not patriotic to have such luxuries." He is inspiring piquant paragraphs describing the secretary as "Lord Orde" (Mr. Julian Orde).

* * *

Practically my last job for Northcliffe before I went into the Army concerned an interview Haig had given to French journalists, which talked of "breaking through" and routing the Germans. When the interview was reproduced in England, a Sunday newspaper said that Bonar Law would repudiate it in the House. The Chief telephoned me to tell Lloyd George that the interview had been given to honest French journalists and to implore extreme caution in the House. The suggestion that these newspapermen were lying would be taken in France as the gravest affront, and the Germans would make endless propaganda of the repudiation of the interview.

Soon after I had passed this message on, the Press Bureau issued a ban on any further discussion of the Haig interview. Next day the Chief came up from Broadstairs to see Lloyd George and Bonar Law,

leaving as early as 7 a.m. He repeated his warning of the effect in France of repudiation of the interview, or of "blaming the reporters." Later, in the House of Commons, Mr. Snowden and Mr. Dillon raised the subject in question, but discussion was "scotched" as not being in the public interest.

For nearly two years Army service now removed me from contact with Northcliffe. He recommended me for a commission via the Inns of Court O.T.C., and a few days before I left for Berkhamstead he sent for me to say good-bye. I saw him at *The Times* office, where he had invited me for tea. It was the day on which the Dardanelles report had been issued, with what Northcliffe described as "its condemnation of the *old gang*." It was also the day on which he had presided at an Aldwych Club luncheon to Sir Edward Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty, at which grave speeches had been made about the submarine menace and our food outlook. I found the Chief in morning dress, therefore, and looking much more formal and spick and span than usual—not nearly so attractive to look upon as in his blue lounge suit and spotted tie. He talked about the speeches at the Aldwych Club and of the very serious state of affairs. "And the faint-hearts are talking again of peace," he said rather vehemently. "There's far too much talk of peace—far too much of it in the newspapers. It is creating a peace atmosphere. There can be no peace yet." He went on to talk of his

newspapers. He was worried about the paper shortage—caused by the German submarine successes ; and he had put the *Daily Mail* up to one penny. This, he said, would reduce sales and save paper. He preferred, he said, to have an eight-page "complete" paper, and charge more for it, rather than a four-pager at a half-penny. He knew the other papers would attack him for that. "I know also," he said to me, "that Valentine Smith [the circulation manager] protests that I am destroying his life's work—but we must do it. . . . Newspapers must suffer like everything else. Do you know, the profits were £88 last week. That sort of thing can't go on." He told me with a laugh that the directors of the Paris *Daily Mail* had stopped the "salary" of £1,000 a year which he got from that paper, and so he wondered what was going to happen to his London salary—which I had heard stated was £25,000.

Then, as if he realised these were distressing things to discuss with a man who was going into the Army, he suddenly said, "The office is looking after you and your dependants properly, I hope. Let me know if things are not satisfactory. Write to me, and come to see me whenever you get leave. . . . You have a little son, haven't you ? Take him these from me." And he walked across to a large cupboard, which I saw was packed with toys, and pulled out a gorgeous Redskin costume and a dandy cowboy outfit. He went on rather wistfully, as I expressed surprise at finding a

children's toy cupboard in the dignified precincts of *The Times*, "I am very fond of children. I like the society of young people. I have forty young nephews and nieces. Here are their photos. They are at liberty to come to this room when they like. Sometimes they come and take charge of me and the whole place. They love to come and see me. That's why I keep the toy cupboard. I am here every Thursday afternoon. . . ." I could not help feeling as I came away that in one respect at least I was wealthier than Northcliffe. I had my children.

Only once did I see him again during the war—when on leave after a few weeks at Berkhamstead.

"Ah, I am glad you remembered to come and see me," he said. "You look better and younger. What are you doing? How do you work? What do you get to eat?"

I told him of our drill, eating, sleeping, study, and fatigues.

"Fatigues? That's cleaning up and that sort of thing, eh?"

"Yes. This week I'm emptying latrine buckets, and getting early-morning shaving water for N.C.O.s. I can't help laughing at the contrast with a few weeks ago . . . helping you to upset Governments, ringing up Prime Ministers, and riding in Rolls-Royces."

"You ought to be in the Intelligence Department. Don't let the Army destroy your initiative or sense of

responsibility. . . . Good-bye, and good luck. Come and see me again. . . . There are no A I men with exemptions in my employ. I heard about one or two the other day, and I passed the comb to Caird. . . . Did you hear the joke about Swaffer ? ”

Swaffer went to join up at a recruiting office in Holborn. To the astonishment of Swaffer and everybody else, they passed him A 1. Swaffer explained that he had answered the doctor's questions by saying he was “ Sandow's chief assistant,” and they had taken him at his word. When he went back to the office, Northcliffe cried, “ Good heavens ! Stop the war ! If Swaffer is A 1, it's all over.” The Chief, who had been saying that the recruiting authorities were raking in heaps of men not physically fit for service, made much of this incident, and Swaffer was called back for a special examination, when he was placed amongst the rejecteds.

Another case was that of Twells Brex (that *was* his real name), the humorous writer, who, though really quite a crock, went up to the recruiting office in the hope of being of some service and declared himself under age. But Brex was doomed—despite his passing the doctor—doomed to a lingering death less merciful than many of the battlefield. Two years later he showed us how to die. On his death-bed he wrote, “ Before Sunset ”—a fearless challenger to the Reaper, a message of hope to the bereaved.

Northcliffe, too, eventually "joined up," as he once put it to me. He went to the United States during the first part of 1917 to organise our supply agencies there at the request of Lloyd George. His fierce energies were for months devoted entirely to the British War Mission. He left his newspapers in England to themselves. When he came back to London in November 1917 he was offered a post in the Cabinet as Air Minister—a new post the creation of which he himself had urged. He refused, because, as he wrote the Prime Minister, "I can do better work if I maintain my independence and am not gagged by a loyalty that I do not feel towards the whole of your Administration." He turned to his newspaper work again, and began to urge the creation of an Allied War Council to secure unity of control on all the war fronts, and so prevent "the incompetent handling of affairs in Europe." Later he was asked by Lloyd George to take charge of the War Office. Again he declined a Cabinet post. Again he said it would mean loss of his independence. Then, in May 1918, when the War Cabinet decided to start a propaganda campaign against the enemy, Northcliffe, who had ceaselessly criticised our lack of such a campaign, accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to be its director. The rigour with which he conducted this "paper offensive" against the Germans is a matter of history. It was too rigorous for the more internationally minded H. G. Wells, who helped

Northcliffe for but a week or two before a quarrel as to methods led to his resignation.

Then, in November 1918, came the collapse of Germany ; the Armistice ; and the plans for the Treaty of Peace. Northcliffe felt he ought to go to the Peace Conference ; but in this matter the politicians outmanœuvred the journalist. This was where he "stepped off" the bus. Northcliffe, it is well to bear in mind, had come back from the United States earlier in the year with the adulation of Americans ringing in his ears. The "most powerful man in Britain," they had called him. Did he believe it ? Did he think he had passed from journalism to statesmanship ? Did he refuse those two Cabinet offers because he thought he was worthy of something higher—even, as some have suggested, the Prime Ministership itself ? Did he feel there was coming to him some mystic call to assist in ushering in a new post-war age ? And when Lloyd George bluntly told him to "Go to hell," did he feel he had failed in the supreme mission of his life ?

It was at this crisis of his career that, back from the Army, I came once more into touch with the Chief. The famous "coupon" election campaign of 1918 was in progress. I had been released "on leave pending demobilisation" for work at the *Daily Mail*, and my first job was to take charge of an "election special" for distribution among our troops in France. I soon learned that a great change had come over the relations

GO TO HELL !

between Northcliffe and Lloyd George. In my innocence of any quarrel between them I assumed it would be the right thing to play up Lloyd George in this election. I knew better next day. I thought I was going to be fired. It was obviously "go slow" on Lloyd George if one wanted to avoid trouble.

Not then, nor ever, did I get Northcliffe's version of the quarrel, but Mr. Lloyd George has since told me : "When Northcliffe asked me to put him on the Peace Delegation I told him to go to hell. I broke with Northcliffe. I refused absolutely to have him at the Peace Conference. I put up with him for four years. The break had to come—when he wanted to dictate to me. As Prime Minister I could not have it. Northcliffe thought he could run the country. I could not allow that. It was a good thing for me that I did not get turned out while he was alive or he would have claimed he had done it. I was with Poincaré when news came of Lord Northcliffe's death. It was a great blow to Poincaré. He was much moved—as if a big support had been swept away. Northcliffe was a great man—but he could not be allowed to dominate the Prime Minister."

The quarrel between these two great men, both equally anxious to win the peace as well as the war, was, it seems to me, inevitable from the outset of their association. Each, I feel, thought he had the other in his pocket. Each had something in his make-up of the dictator, and his resentment of rival authority. With the

war over—the war won—Lloyd George, hailed as our man of victory, with authority and prestige now beyond challenge, had no need to consider “give and take” with any would-be newspaper dictator. He was definitely, for the time being, “on top.” He could afford himself breathing-space.

Their quarrel was never healed. Never more did I ring up Burgh Heath and “present Lord Northcliffe’s compliments, and he would like to know . . .” etc. I often wondered in the earlier days (nothing in the relationship of big men causes me wonder now)—I often wondered whether Lloyd George’s Radical worshippers in remote Wales viewed with anything but grave disapproval their idol’s association with Northcliffe—that is, if they knew it ; and I find an entry in my diary in 1916 to this effect : “The other day, in Red Wharf Bay, Anglesey, I was looked upon as a heathen by a Welsh newsagent when I asked for the *Daily Mail*. I wonder what he would have said had I told him what I knew of the comings and goings between the owner of that paper and the newsagent’s hero Lloyd George. ‘Nobody in these parts reads that lying rag, look you,’ said the man, ‘except a silly old man, in Pentraeth, indeed. Stick you to the *Daily News* and Lloyd George.’ He went on to protest so much about the virtues of Lloyd George that I interposed, ‘But he’s not God, you know.’ ‘Ah, indeed, no, you are right,’ was the reply, ‘but he is young yet, look you.’

Perhaps Mr. Lloyd George will one day lift the veil and tell us in detail the full story of his association with Northcliffe in those dark days when they joined forces in common pursuit of victory for their country. It was very seldom after the war that Northcliffe referred at all to Lloyd George—to me, at any rate ; but his face would cloud when Lloyd George was mentioned, as if he was thinking, “ The one man who really thwarted me.” I think his exclusion from the Peace Conference was the big disappointment of Northcliffe’s life ; it disillusioned him as to his power against that of the politicians. His pride was very much hurt. He disclaimed to me once that he had any vendetta against Lloyd George, and struck an attitude which was intended to convey his often-expressed maxim, “ Never fight a man smaller than yourself.” That was why he generally left the subject alone. I feel he thought that to discuss it at all implied a confession of his own inferiority. He was convinced that he had greatly befriended Lloyd George during the most critical period of his public career, and once I heard him refer briefly to this. He said he had literally “ pushed ” Lloyd George into the Prime Ministership and held him there. He said that Lloyd George was not too happy about it, because he feared the resurrection of Asquith and his coming out on top after all ; and Lloyd George was anxious to know what would happen then. “ I said to him,” said Northcliffe, “ ‘ You have your pen.’ ”

CHAPTER VIII

NEWSPAPERS AND YOUNG MEN

Northcliffe during the next year got his mind back where it belonged—on his newspapers. The war years had left their mark, not only on the papers, but on the tired men who had been producing them (short staff and long hours) through those strenuous, anxious times. The younger men were flocking back from the Army. They were needed for the new era. We had got to get back to variety of news and ideas. For four years the war had been the daily “big story,” ready-made every night. That had become dull routine, and a brake on initiative. Now there was a brighter dawn, a new generation of readers. The papers had to be pulled round—adjusted to the new conditions of life.

Young men ! They became the Chief’s obsession. He wanted them for the rejuvenation of his papers. He began shooting at his “higher-ups.” They were money-logged, he would say, satisfied to go on as they were in comfort, dried up of ambition, no incentive. They had served him well and should be properly treated, but the day of the young man had come round again. He brought in to his main *entourage* a quite different type of

personality from those of the older days in the shape of a brown-eyed, debonair, suave young bachelor from Montreal, Sir Campbell Stuart.

Sir Campbell was thirty-four. Two years before he had become the youngest knight in the British Empire. He had been the Chief's right-hand man on the American Mission, and subsequently his Deputy Director of Propaganda. He had directorships on *The Times*, (Managing Director) *Continental Daily Mail*, and *Daily Mail*, and was now Managing Editor of the last-named journal. He symbolised Northcliffe's post-war idea of leadership for his newspaper enterprises, the spearhead of a new and younger generation of executives. In advising me of his appointment, the Chief said we were to take no one on the staff more than twenty-five. Sir Campbell's advent caused a flutter. Who is he? asked people. What does he know about newspapers? What is a Managing Editor, anyhow? The status varies in different offices, but Northcliffe made it clear that Sir Campbell had been appointed under Marlowe, and, he announced, with Marlowe's approval. There was a statement in the *Manchester Guardian* that Stuart was to be Editor, and the Chief rang me up to contradict it as "a gross libel on Mr. Marlowe." There came a cable from Montreal that the appointment of Campbell Stuart had caused great interest there, and stating that, with Lord Beaverbrook at the head of the *Express*, there would be opportunity for friendly rivalry

between him and the other Canadian now at the *Mail*. We did not print that cablegram.

Whatever Campbell Stuart may, or may not, have known about newspapers, he knew a great deal about getting on with other people ; and he had a keen political news sense. My associations with him were of the pleasantest. He was a tower of strength to me in the campaign for popularising wireless. That was before the arrival of the broadcasting era. Marconi House looked on us as "stunters," and said quite bluntly that we were not helping the development of serious wireless : but Campbell Stuart backed me up. He short-circuited for me unimaginative technicians who were suspicious of newspapers, and put me in personal touch with Marconi and others who had vision and the capacity for action—just as Campbell Stuart had. Northcliffe had a deep affection for Stuart. "Some people are making the mistake of under-estimating him," he said to me once. "That is because he is so pleasant : but they will see one day that there can be the iron hand under the velvet glove."

Among other young men the Chief was bringing forward was Peter Goudie, my earlier companion of dismal pre-war sub-editing days. He had gone to Paris, and had looked on it as exile ; but had come to the top like cream and eventually arrived on the Board in London. Others were Oscar Pulvermacher, who had been with Northcliffe "man and boy," and had become a real

genius at picking out stories and playing them up. His like as a newspaper "showman" was, and is, something rare. There was Bernard Falk, another clever Jew, from Manchester, whom Northcliffe had promised a Rolls-Royce if he got the sale of the *Weekly Dispatch* up to a million. Falk was a great character, and took with supreme good humour the jokes about Jews of which Northcliffe always made him the butt. "You belong to the Jewish persuasion, don't you, Falk?" I once heard him say, and then add quickly: "Who persuaded you?" Falk was one of the keenest news men I ever met. His was the *real* inquiring mind. Once, in Manchester, a youth, it is said, was seen to dash into the middle of Piccadilly and spread out his arms to stop the fire brigade. "What do you want? Can you direct us to the fire?" shouted the captain. "No, I'm a reporter. I want you to tell me where the fire is," was the reply from the audacious youth, who, the story goes, was Bernard Falk.

There were other young men on whom the Chief had his eye. He talked often of his plans for the future of his business in relation to them, but the fruition of any spectacular scheme he might have conceived was eventually frustrated by death. In the meantime, despite the atmosphere of uncertainty and unrest his often erratic ways produced, despite his still vigorous driving, we were, on the whole, a fairly happy family. There was certainly appearing a suggestion of mellowness in the

Chief's general outlook which was very pleasant to notice. In consequence, it seemed that softer tones were promising to run right through the organisation.

One of his frequent complaints about the paper now was that it had become "too respectable"; another that we did not select *real* pictures. As an instance, he said we had printed a picture of the smiling King of Spain. "Alfonso is always smiling. His smile is not news. If you got a picture of Alfonso weeping, that would be news." There were scores of similar minor criticisms revealing the attention the Chief was once more giving to the details of his newspaper enterprises. In the summer of 1919 he was absent for about three months following a throat operation, and when he returned he began to make things hotter and hotter, both at Carmelite House and Printing House Square. He talked of wrong men in wrong jobs; he threatened "naggings" and "shocks" till he got his papers on the rails again; and he caused it to be known that he intended to let the younger men have a show.

As deputy to the News Editor at this time, I had occasionally to take charge of the news room. On one occasion when I was doing this duty the Chief rang up about 11 o'clock in the morning and said:

"Why are there so many people wearing silk hats in Hampstead this morning? Send a reporter to find out why."

A few minutes later he rang me again.

“ Have you found out about this silk hat display at Hampstead ? Everybody is talking about it. I thought you would have known the reason. I can tell you why it is, but I don’t think you know. It is the Jewish New Year, and none of the ilk is in the City. They are all wearing their best and going to the synagogue. Now that’s a good story for you, if it’s properly handled. It ought to be headed ‘ MANY TALL HATS AT HAMPSTEAD.’ It’s no good heading it ‘ JEWISH NEW YEAR.’ People will be captured by the heading about the hats. The reporter should start his story by saying that many people wondered why so many tall hats were on view in Hampstead to-day. . . . Be picturesque in treatment. These are the little, well-written, out-of-the-way stories of which we want more in the paper. Most of the other papers will miss it. They do not know it is the Jewish New Year. Don’t let the story be offensive. We have many Jewish readers, and should give them the news of all their festivals. Get a Jew to read the story through after it has been written to see that it does not contain any foolish mistakes.”

Next day he rang up to say that “ the 1,500,000 Jews in London ” found something to interest them in our paper.

Soon after this I had several weeks in the news chair. Fish was on holiday, and there were reports that when he came back he was to be promoted Assistant Editor, with a seat on the Board. I remember these few weeks

THE QUEST FOR "SCOOPS"

as the most gruelling in my newspaper career. It was obvious the Chief was trying me out from every angle to see if I were the right man for the News Editorship. He would ring me up before breakfast to call my attention to things in our own paper and in the rival papers. Often, only half awake, I would tell him I would look them up, and he would say : " You haven't read them ? I read them all hours ago. I read all the morning papers by 5.30 every morning." He would continue his telephone bombardment through the day. I would go home late, limp of body and weary of mind. I would wake early with a vague dread of the day in front of me, and would take no breakfast until I had seen the other papers and learned whether I had won or lost the previous day in the incessant quest for " scoops." I tried to keep smiling through it all. I tried to think of myself as a rock battered by an angry sea. But I began to realise that that was no true simile, that, in fact, I was in danger of being worn down. " Life is too short to put up with this any longer," I said to myself at last ; and there came a day when I decided to break with Northcliffe. My diary says :

Wednesday, November 5, 1919 : After a fortnight as News Editor I decided to-day that the time had come to resign. There is a limit to one's capacity for putting up with nagging, and I thought I had reached my limit to-day after two solid weeks of it. The Chief has been on the telephone to me, at office and at home, morning,

noon, and night. Twice he has caught me in my bath at 7 o'clock to cross-examine me about the contents of the rival morning papers. My first day on the desk he rang me up at 11 o'clock. "You are too slow, my boy," he said, because I answered him with careful deliberation. The next day he burst on me with a "Wake up, wake up, I say." This sort of thing went on until to-day, when he rang me up angrily to say, "Yours is the worst paper in London this morning. A damnable paper. I am watching you. You are having a great chance. You won't get it again." I made up my mind as he went along that this was the finish as far as I was concerned, and, at the end of his tirade, I said very quietly, though I was ready to burst with resentment, "Very well. If you are not satisfied . . ." Then I realised I was talking to a "dead" telephone. He had put up the receiver. I sat back to await the inevitable sack. I started to draft my resignation to get in first. About ten minutes later the telephone rang. I took up the receiver, and this is what I heard: "Is that you, Tom?" "Yes, Chief," I replied. "I entirely exonerate you," he went on. "I have been making further inquiries. But you are not being properly served. You must exercise your authority. Assert yourself. Give them hell about it." I was about to ask whom he meant by "them" when once again he put up the receiver, giving me no chance to reply. I wondered why, for the first time, he had called me by my Christian

name. All day I wondered what had caused this softening of his attitude to me. Late in the afternoon he telephoned again. "I haven't seen you for a long time. Come and have a talk with me to-night at 6.30. You know my house at 1 Carlton Gardens." So I went. After a short wait in the library I was taken in the lift up four flights to the Chief's room. Leaving the white and gold of the landing, I found myself in a large square chamber with panelled walls, a great fireplace, heavily curtained windows, a settee, and two easy chairs before the fire, and the inevitable telephone on a small table. In one of the armchairs lolled his lordship. From beneath the folds of a spacious dressing-gown peeped a big, fat thigh in pants. He had no trousers on, no collar or tie, but wore slippers and socks. His face looked coppery and fleshy. I thought of Nero. A well-groomed young man with very long legs was spread in and about the armchair on Northcliffe's right. "This," said the Chief, motioning to the other man who disentangled himself from the chair and offered me a hand, "is Sir Campbell Stuart. You can talk quite freely before him. He is one of my directors." Then he turned to Sir Campbell and said, "This young man"—opening a stubby hand in my direction "is News Editor of the *Daily Mail* during the absence of Fish. I want to see what he has in him, what he can do, what he has to say for himself." I took the cue and said I was going to have a great deal to say. "I suppose you

expect me to be candid, Chief," I said. "Of course, my boy," he replied; "what's the use of bringing you here to find out about my business if you hide things from me?"

"Well, then," I said, "I think you throw too many bricks . . ."

I expected a torrent. Instead, there was great merriment. "Listen to that," shouted Northcliffe to Campbell Stuart. "He calls my careful criticism 'bricks.' That's the way young men talk of the Chief. Go on [to me]. How old are you?"

"Thirty-four."

"You don't look it. How wonderful to be young. But at your age I was managing five businesses . . . five big businesses." It seemed to me there was no reply to that, and, after a pause, he went on to talk of my own job. I told him of the heavy pressure of the news room at Carmelite House, the dozens of people one had to see every day, and suffer every caller gladly in case he had a news jewel in his pocket; of the five-day week he had started, which had, in effect, considerably reduced my staff. In short, I told him one never got a minute to think during the day, and at last I played my card about his "bricks" again. But he would not be drawn.

"I hear you are getting on well with the men," he said. "That is essential. Handling a staff of reporters is one of the most difficult things I know. They are not

DON'T BE AFRAID

like the ordinary human beings. They are so temperamental. Their talents and qualities vary so. A news editor is like the conductor of an orchestra. He must know his men and what they can do in a special line. He must know when to play light or heavy, and *who* can play light or heavy. He must not put the cornet player at the big drum. . . . Do you realise, young man, that you are meeting with new and strong opposition? The *Express*, the *Chronicle*, and the *News* have got vigorous young men at the game. They are now paying salaries on my scale. We have got to meet keener competition. What we want is more of the young man spirit, more initiative. . . . You young men are afraid. I want you to be Bolsheviks and make yourselves felt. The paper is too middle-aged. Your editorial conference is all talk. It is like a school. The young ones there, if they ever go, are afraid to speak." I demurred, but he went on with a wave of the hand, "Don't be afraid. Fight for yourself and your opinions. The conference is middle-aged, and, like most middle-aged things, wastes time. It does, doesn't it? I am told it lasts three-quarters of an hour. How long does *The Times* conference last?"

"Half an hour," butted in Sir Campbell.

"And they are younger men," proceeded the Chief. "The average age there is six years younger than at the *Daily Mail*. Now, who goes to this conference of yours? Let's go through them. . . ." And then came a

most embarrassing review of my colleagues, mostly my superiors, their qualities and their defects. I found it all rather distasteful, but I saw it was Northcliffe's way of encouraging a young man's confidence in himself. Some of the things he said about some of my seniors for whom I had the greatest respect were harsh, and in my mind ran the thought that some day, to some young man, he might be saying the same things about me. . . .

So when, at 7 o'clock, he stopped and told me that I had not said very much, and that I had ten minutes left for anything I had to say, I told him that I considered I was "good for ten years."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, in ten years' time you will want some younger man for my job. I shall not grumble. But I want a good innings during those ten years and I'm going to fight for them. I have no illusions about this matter, Chief."

He looked at me curiously. "We do not do things like that," he snapped. "In ten years, and before, if you prove yourself, you will be a director. . . . Where do you live?"

"Dulwich Village."

"Too far out. You ought to live in the West End."

"I will when I get a West End salary."

He ignored the hint, and said, holding out his hand to bid me good night, "It is very responsible work you are doing. Do you realise that you are responsible for what more than one million people will be reading

to-morrow morning? You are looking at life through a peephole for all those people. It is a great responsibility. . . .” I walked towards Trafalgar Square wondering hard about the future. Obviously I myself had been paraded for some purpose the Chief has in view, but about which his mind is not yet made up. His words about my responsibility rang in my ears. “Controlling the news for the world’s best newspaper in the world’s greatest city.” I felt in a blue funk about it.

* * *

This interview was, I suppose, the turning-point of my career. I did not resign, as I had intended, and for the next three weeks (until another important thing happened for me) I continued my “try-out.” Northcliffe remained as busy as ever on the telephone from early morning till night, but there was less driving and more leading in his methods towards me ; and a quite flattering interest in my well-being and comfort. He would ring up to tell me not to overdo things, to “get out and about more”—this not alone for health reasons, but also because “news is not got in Fleet Street, but in the great world where you meet people.” He had ascertained that I usually caught the 7.20 p.m. train from St. Paul’s to Dulwich, and often he would come through on the telephone at 7 o’clock and order me not to miss the train. At 7.30 he would ring through again to see if I had caught it, and, if he found me still at the

office, he would rebuke me gravely and urge me "not to get tied up with detail which others can see to," but to get home to my wife and my dinner, so that I could relax and come back in the morning fresh and with bright ideas. He would talk about food. One day he told me he believed in eating little and often. "People who eat big meals work in fits and starts—and slumbers," he said. "Where are you taking luncheon, to-day?"

"At the restaurant under Ludgate Circus station," I said.

"Goodness," he laughed, "that was a luncheon haunt of newspaper men when I was battling my way up in Fleet Street years ago. I was earning only a few pounds a week, and someone said if I went to this restaurant at luncheon-time I should see the big men of Fleet Street there. So I decided to go and inspect them. Neither their eating nor their conversation impressed me. I was astonished to see such a collection of mediocrity. I said to myself, 'These are the giants of Fleet Street . . . directors and editors and special writers . . . the men who are responsible for those dull and superior journals which affect not to fear competition from a popular Press. . . . There is nothing to beat in this lot.' I can remember now leaving that restaurant with the firm conviction that there was nothing to beat in that overfed gang, slipshod in food as well as work . . . and with the determination to set about myself and

give them the beating. . . . I should like to be coming with you to-day to see how the place and the types have changed. Look yourself to-day at the overfed pundits of Fleet Street you will no doubt see there, and let them be a warning and an inspiration to you. ”

The luck of the news was with me during this period. Very little happened that we missed, and we had a good share of “ exclusives.” The Chief himself was extraordinarily helpful. He would telephone me about things he had seen or heard—matters of little as well as big importance. He had a marvellous eye for anything new or picturesque, and would ring up quite excitedly about an unexpected bird he had noticed on his way to Thanet, or about the antics of his barometer (he was always most keen on weather), or about some new object of interest in a Kentish village. I always made it my business to get something in the paper of anything of this sort he reported, often working it up into a bright three- or four-inch “ talking point,” and this obviously pleased him. To make sure of getting these little news jewels in the paper, I would mark them on my list with a cross, and the Night Editor knew that an item so marked was one in which the Chief was interested, and in it would go. This is not to say they did not go in on their merits. Anybody who has worked in the rush of a modern newspaper office needs no reminding of the uncanny way in which news items often go astray, the casualties often being the heaviest

among news items specially sent in by the Brass Hats. Northcliffe often playfully said that he had the greatest difficulty in getting anything in his own newspaper.

He was always willing to help with a difficult story if he could, and I have on record a notable instance at this time which reveals also his readiness to stand up for his subordinates. We had happened to hear of a remarkable happening in India which was apparently being kept quiet by officialdom. A young and enterprising reporter was instructed to get the facts from the India Office, the Foreign Office, or any other Government quarter likely to know. Powerful influences were at work to prevent publication, and the reporter came back to say that a high Government official had told him he would complain to Lord Northcliffe about his endeavour to get the information. I told this to the Chief. He asked for details of what we knew, and then said, "Leave it to me. I will get the facts. I will not have my reporters threatened." The next day we published the story. The Chief said he was sorry to have had to do it, but he had confirmed the threat to our reporter and he could not stand for that. He mentioned to me a rule which he said had existed at *The Times* for more than a hundred years that when people asked for something to be suppressed it should be specially inserted. Delane, he added, held the view that it was the duty of a newspaper to publish facts irrespective of the feelings of people, however distinguished or interested.

He asked me to let the staff know that if ever they were threatened like this he would support them.

I remember too, at this time, his keen interest in all the details of departments other than news—the fiction department, for instance. He frequently complained that we of the news staff, in our ignorance, looked askance at serial stories, and took no interest in them. To remedy that fault, on one occasion he adopted a novel method. He let it be known that he would ring up a certain number of members of the staff each day to ask what they thought of the serial. We all read it diligently or got Heath Hosken, in charge of our fiction, to tell us about it. For the first time in my life I read a serial through, and was intensely annoyed because the Chief did not ring me up once to ask about it. I felt I had wasted a good deal of time. The Chief took a sharp personal interest in these stories, especially during those seasons when news was scarce. His idea was that a good action serial, with exciting daily “curtains,” filled the gap. It was something that made the wife or the daughter of the family say to father, “Don’t forget I want the *Daily Mail* to-day to see what’s happened in the serial.” He read the daily instalments himself before they were passed for publication, and often altered them to make a “curtain” that would whet the reader’s appetite for the next day. His passion for the news side of things, and for explaining, extended to his treatment of serials. Once he came across a sentence

something like this : " One afternoon in November a tall, dark man walked along Bond Street."

" Who knows Bond Street," he said, " except Londoners ? What of the great world beyond ? London is *so* provincial—thinks everybody knows all about it. Say *where* Bond Street is and *what* it is."

Three weeks of my probation passed, and the atmosphere—to me at any rate—remained electrical and uncertain. It was now no secret that my predecessor in the News Editor's chair was to be Assistant Editor, with a seat on the Board, and that I was being definitely tried out as his successor. I felt confident I was holding the job down, but, despite comforting evidences of the Chief's approval, I was still not sure. And, apparently, neither was he. So he put me through another ordeal before making his final decision. It was an ordeal which—as he afterwards told me—would, if I came successfully through it, not only prove my competence for the job, but also establish the fact for others to see. Late in the afternoon of November 25, 1919, he rang me up and said : " You are to preside at the editorial conference to-night."

This was the evening conference at which the heads of the various editorial departments met to discuss the day's news and decide on general lines the plan of the following day's paper in news and views—as far as they were able on the reports of the day's events, up to that moment, before them. It was a conference at which the

Editor or one of the "higher-ups" usually presided ; but of late Northcliffe had been urging the value of varying the point of view. "You young men," he said to me, "will have to take conference in turn—so that I can test your mettle." I thought it rather a capricious thing to do, but Marlowe, the Editor, was big enough to be able to watch with perfect good humour these attempts of the Chief to find promising young men, especially as he (the Chief) made it plain to all that, after the conference, the power of saying "No" remained with the Editor. One or two others had preceded me in this business of the conference chair, and that made me feel less lonely and conspicuous, but I had no doubt that I should have to be wary to avoid making enemies. I felt rather unhappy. Here is what I wrote at the time :

Tuesday, November 25, 1919 : To-day the Chief carried out his threat to put me in charge of the *Daily Mail* editorial conference. He telephoned me only a few minutes before it was due to begin and said, "Tom, you are to take the conference to-night." "Very well, Chief," I replied. I went at once to the Editor's room and told Marlowe of the Chief's message, and said I was sure I could rely on his assistance in what was going to be a great ordeal for me. Marlowe was simply great. He smiled cheerfully, said "Certainly," and offered me a cigarette. I went in to the conference-room and half expected to see Northcliffe

But, to my great relief, he was not there, although Price, his confidential secretary, was an early arrival, obviously sent to make his report. As the "elder brethren," as the Chief has styled them, filed in, their eyebrows lifting when they saw me in the chair, I had feelings similar to those when I entered church on my wedding morn. I knew I was the youngest man in the room ; I knew I was surrounded by the cream of London journalism. I knew only too well my own short-comings and limitations. I knew all eyes were on me in Carmelite House now that the Chief had hurled me into the limelight. I knew some of them were saying to each other, " How long will he last ? " for they had seen caprices of this sort on the part of Northcliffe before. In they came—H. W. Wilson, the leader-writer and naval expert ; Valentine Williams, the Foreign Editor ; MacLeod, the Literary Editor ; Miss Cohen, of the Woman's Page ; Beach Thomas, special writer and ex-war correspondent ; Sir Andrew Caird, a director ; Arthur Baker, Art Editor ; Pulvermacher, Night Editor ; and others. There was a good muster to see the fun. Marlowe entered quietly and took an easy chair some minutes after we had kicked off. . . . Knowing that the Chief deprecated long talking conferences, I announced at the start that the proceedings must be over in twenty minutes. Somehow or other we got through in that time, with leaders settled and the main news, literary and pictorial features, well in

train for to-morrow's paper. Half an hour after the start I was settled again in my own room clearing up my correspondence. The telephone bell rang soon afterwards, and the operator announced, "The Chief." This is what Northcliffe said : " You did very well at conference, my boy. I have had two independent reports from my ' spies ' there, and they both agree you did very well, getting along briskly and cutting out the talk. You will guess who one of my ' spies ' is. The other you cannot guess. . . . I am very pleased indeed. You must continue to take the conference."

November 27, 1919 : I had the following conversation with the Chief to-day :

He : You have done very well while acting as News Editor, and you are going to stay there. What is your salary, my boy ?

I : Six hundred.

He : What does Fish get ?

I : I do not know.

He : You ought to know. I cannot understand this childish secrecy about salaries. Everybody ought to know what everybody else is getting. Do you know what the Editor gets ?

I : No. I suppose £5,000 at least.

He : One of our editors gets £25,000.

I : Something to look forward to, Chief.

He : I am going to make you News Editor. Not all the directors agree with me about it. Some of them say

you are too young and won't have authority. I have told them I will see to that. One of them says you know nothing. I said you can learn.

I : I'm sorry my youthful looks are against me. I'm really getting on. (I was thirty-five.)

He : I am going to add another £200 a year to your salary.

I : Thanks, Chief, but——

He : But what? Isn't it enough?

I : I don't suppose I personally am worth any more ; but I don't think it is enough for the job. The post of News Editor of the *Daily Mail* ought to be worth £1,000 a year to begin with.

He : You are right, my boy. It shall be £1,000. . . Do you know, when I was seventeen and working on the "stone" I was offered £500 a year by several London papers? . . . How old is the man on the "stone" for the *Daily Mail*?

I : About thirty-three, I think.

He : Twice as old as I was when I had my first day on the "stone" at Coventry. Tell our man that what he wants to cultivate is the element of surprise on the main news page. . . . We are getting a better paper, thanks to my "shake-ups." One of the "elder brethren" says I am disturbing the staff. That is just what I mean to do.

Wednesday, January 7, 1920 : Dined with the Chief at Carlton Gardens to-night. Also present: F. E. Bussy

(head of our business and ideas department and the organising genius behind our Ideal Homes Exhibition) ; " Poy " (Percy Fearon, the political cartoonist of the *Evening News*, with whom I worked in Manchester on my return from China in 1907) ; Sheldrake, the trade correspondent of *The Times* ; and Leslie Clark, a rising young man at the Amalgamated Press, where Northcliffe's papers of a periodical nature are published. We were told not to bother to dress. Northcliffe wore black trousers, pumps, and a short, flannelly sort of jacket, much like a pyjama jacket. He was in good spirits, and it was a jolly little dinner. The burden of his conversation was the Ideal Homes Exhibition, which he said was no use except as an advertisement, and the improvements he contemplated in the *Evening News*, although his general talk took us all over the world, from New York to Nice, and he started also a keen little discussion about petrol engines and the helicopter, a model of which he said he had asked Mr. Royce (of Rolls-Royce fame) to make for him. He seemed very observant of every one of us. I took white wine and port, and gave the champagne and liqueurs a miss, as I felt I should be a better listener than a talker. The Chief took white wine, missed the port, but had a glass of champagne and a brandy liqueur. He ate very sparingly. The dinner over, he showed us one or two pictures, also Lady Northcliffe's boudoir. " She is working here at 5.30 every morning." And then he left

us. "I go to bed always at 9.30," he said. "You will find a drink downstairs. Good night."

* * *

The next six months were among the hardest but pleasantest I can recall. I had a freer hand than most News Editors ever had : the Chief talked often about our "ascending journal," and it seemed I could do no wrong.

Saturday, January 24, 1920 : The Pearl (Insurance Co.) strike, in which we have been backing the men in their demand for a minimum wage, was settled to-day. The Chief himself handled the campaign, putting Curnock in charge of the "stunting." There has been some head-wagging, but Northcliffe brushed all opposition aside. As he said to me, "Some people don't see what a big thing this is, my boy. They lack vision. We are getting the confidence of Labour by backing these men." He certainly fought boldly and spectacularly. He started by returning an advertisement sent by the Pearl Co. to the *Weekly Dispatch* and announcing that he had given the £500, which the advertisement would have cost, to the Strikers' Fund. He added that the *Daily Mail* would pay £1,000 a week to the same fund. He had to pay it for two weeks only. . . .

Tuesday, January 27, 1920 : The daily conferences are now being held in the spacious and ornate Room One, which used to be Northcliffe's—and still is on the rare occasions when he now visits Carmelite House. This

ROOM ONE

change is by order of the Chief. Using his stock phrase, "Small rooms for small men and small ideas," he expressed annoyance when he heard the conferences were being held in one of the smaller editorial rooms on the second floor. . . . This Room One is worth describing. It is a vast hall rather than a room. I remember my first entry years ago, when its vastness and its luxury held my young mind momentarily spellbound. I remember the awful distance I had to walk from the door across a silent desert of carpet to the Editor sitting afar off at a flat desk, his eyes on me all those terrible moments it took to reach him. I have learned since that it was all planned that way. "You can learn a lot about a man by watching him walk to you across a room," said the Chief. The room overlooks Tallis Street. It is protected on the east side by the secretary's room, and on the west there is an outlet to a director's room. Another door, which does not open from the outside, leads into a corridor. There are huge fireplaces at each end, with massive mantelpieces and electric "candles" with crimson shades. At night the room is illuminated by lights hidden behind a cornice running round the walls. They throw light upwards on to a green and gold strip. The furnishings are in mahogany, the walls are mahogany panelled, with gold line relief. The southern wall is hidden behind bookcases containing expensively bound volumes, for Northcliffe's own use, of his earlier publications, such as the *Sunday Companion*, *Pluck*, *The*

Girls' Friend, and even *Comic Cuts*. They appear to be rather incongruous ornaments to this editorial sanctum of the modern *Daily Mail*, although offset by the morocco-bound Hundred Best Books reposing in an adjacent case. In these later years, as I have known him, Northcliffe has appeared to be a man of simple habits and tastes. I somehow feel that he must have deserted this room, the scene of his labours during many earlier triumphs, because of its garishness and its memories of hectic days of the past, and proceeded to frequent the more mellow and homely room he has had prepared in *The Times* office overlooking the historic Printing House Square. Not long ago I mentioned to him the splendid isolation he must have been able to secure for himself in this room at Carmelite House, with its "barbed wire entanglements" of the outer rooms. "You are quite mistaken," he said. "It was always the easiest thing for anyone to see me who had anything useful to say. I am always accessible to anybody on my staffs except time-wasters, of whom there are many. I do not believe in 'barbed wire entanglements.' I earn my living by being worried. I always have done so. I have no use for the man who is too busy to be seen. The really busy man always has time, because he has his work organised. The man at the top must always make time. If he has no time, it shows he is foolishly tied up with detail, which office-boys can look after, and is not doing what he is paid for—thinking, and receiving

ideas from outside. He is paid to be worried, not to barricade himself on an inaccessible throne. If he shows signs of worry himself at being worried, he is not the man for the job. . . . I have no use for the man who gets rattled. Look at — (mentioning one of his men on another paper). I have been trying to rattle him for weeks. He is taking it splendidly. He will be a director one day ” But to get back to Room One. Two last things stand out to catch the eye of all who pass therein. One a beautiful portrait of Lady Northcliffe, resting on an easel ; the other a bronze head of Napoleon, looking from a pedestal at the editorial desk. . . . And in this room of memories and achievement, a room too suffocatingly grand to be likeable, we now by order hold our two daily conferences—the morning one, when we plan what we do at home and abroad, at noon ; the evening one, when the night staff arrives and we review the day’s world events, at 4 or 4.30. I am still lasting in the chair at these conferences. “ You are to continue,” said the Chief. “ If you want a rest, you can nominate someone else.”

Monday, May 17, 1920 : The Chief’s criticisms of the paper have been fairly mild lately. He complains that our pictures are not giving so many of those things which the French call “ actualities,” and also that we have not enough “ man-of-the-world touch ” about the paper. On Saturday he rang me up about noon and said : “ Who are your three youngest reporters ? ”

THREE NICE YOUNG MEN

I told him—Paul Bewsher, Maurice Fagence, and Jack Wright. “Send them down to see me,” he said. “I am at Broadstairs. There is a train leaving within an hour. My car will meet them. I expect them for tea.” The three lads were collected, and, with much trepidation—for they knew not the reason for the summons, and I could not enlighten them—they set out on their adventure. Two of them came back the same night. The third, Bewsher, the irrepressible, was commanded to stay the night. The lads found the Chief in bed when they arrived. He kept them waiting a while before they were called, trembling, as they told me, to his presence. All three, who are back to-day, are still wondering why they were sent for. But a letter I received from the Chief at Elmwood to-day makes it plain that he wanted to see what type of young man we have coming forward, and what was their view of conditions in Carmelite House. He says that my three very nice young reporters gave great joy to him, and “it was so nice to have young people about one.” He mentioned several suggestions they made, and said they spoke enthusiastically of their life at Carmelite House and of their treatment as individuals, not machines.

The “do it now” make-up of the Chief is shown by the way he rings one up at home in the early morning if he gets a surging idea. He cannot wait till his man gets to the office at 11 o’clock. On the other hand, he very seldom bothers one at night, as he is usually in bed by 9.30.

He has a private list of staff telephone numbers, which Tom George, the printer, is called on to revise almost every week, and it is therefore an index of the people in whom he is at the moment interested. It is not surprising to hear that the good-natured George gets many anxious inquiries : " Am I on the Chief's list yet ? " I imagine the Chief gets a deal of fun out of his telephone. One trick of his is to ring up a man and say, for instance, " I am going to ring you up shortly to say something very serious to you." Then he shuts off. Maybe he rings up later : maybe he doesn't. In the meantime the man is wondering. The other day the Chief had his telephone list cut down by half. " It annoys me," he said ; " look at the length of it. And " (this to a member of the staff) " let me congratulate you on the removal of your name. These left on the list are the people I want to grumble at." Northcliffe has a clear and fascinating telephone voice, though lots of people at Carmelite House scramble for safety when they hear he is coming on the line. One man who was caught unawares the other day raised his hat to the voice on the 'phone. Another nervous individual, hearing the Chief was on the line, and fearing he might be asked for, retired to the sanctuary of an office convenience until he was sure the coast was clear. . . . I hear Sutton was at Elmwood when my three young men went to see the Chief and that Bewsher, not knowing who he was, slapped him on the back and said, " Are you on this young man stunt, too ? "

CHAPTER IX

WIRELESS AND AN AMERICAN TRIP

During 1919 and 1920 there developed a great public interest in the magic of wireless telephony which led eventually to that vast modern vehicle of publicity and entertainment which we now call "broadcasting." As a signals officer in the Army I had developed a keen personal interest in wireless, and when I got back to Fleet Street it was but natural I should try to exploit the news side of this fascinating business of communication without wires. As I have indicated, Sir Campbell Stuart gave me enthusiastic backing, but Northcliffe always seemed somewhat cool. He was suspicious. He wondered how this new method of quick and widespread communication was going to affect newspapers. However, he did not express disapproval of the "experiments" I was able to arrange now and then with Marconis, thanks in the main to the generous assistance of my friend Arthur R. Burrows, one of the Marconi men who helped to lay the foundations of the British public interest in broadcasting. Burrows was always ready to co-operate in realising any ideas we put up, despite the "stickiness" of some of his technical friends,

who disapproved of newspaper "stunts," and of G.P.O. aloofness. Through his good offices we sent out a reporter in 1919 to roam Hampstead Heath with a portable wireless set and listen for messages from us transmitted from Chelmsford. The resultant "story" of the "first wireless reporter" created the widest interest. We capped this by sending another reporter with a portable set by train to the coast. As he listened in he got spoken instructions to get out at the next station and report to headquarters. These things seemed sheer wizardry in those days. We erected the latest type of receiving set in our Blackfriars Road premises. We looked for new fields to explore to capture the interest of the then despised amateur "listeners-in." These, who could be counted then only in hundreds, were writing to us every day asking us to conduct "experiments" in which they could take part. No one suspected there would be millions of them in but a few years.

One day Lord Atholstan, the Canadian newspaper owner, and Lady Northcliffe, and a few other distinguished folk, came to an experiment in receiving news reports by wireless telephony which I had arranged at Blackfriars. A day or two later Northcliffe, who had not been present at the experiment, rang me up to say he had heard all about this wonderful affair. "What are you going to do next?" he asked, and went on, "If speech is such a success by wireless, why not song? How many people are there with wireless sets? A few

hundreds? There will be thousands soon—especially young people.” “It has been suggested,” I said, “that we should try to arrange a concert by wireless.” “Capital,” he cried, “but you must have only one artist, and she must be the world’s very best. She is in London now. You know whom I mean—Melba, of course. Get in touch with her at once. Tell her it is I who ask.” And so was arranged that historic occasion of June 15, 1920, which I think really represented the start of the ball rolling for broadcasting. I quote from my diary :

June 16, 1920 : We had the Melba wireless concert last night. She went down to the Marconi place at Chelmsford. We had to arrange for a light supper for her of chicken and champagne. Soon after seven o’clock she started singing into a microphone hooked up with a 15 kw. set transmitting on 2,800 metres wave-length. I listened in at Blackfriars—frame aerial and telephones, not enough to go round. We listened in turns. Melba’s girl secretary was there. Her eyes nearly came out of her head as she heard the nightingale voice in “Addio,” from *La Bohème*. “It is Melba,” she cried in astonishment. I think she had not believed us up to that moment. . . . To-day we are receiving messages from all parts. All Europe was the audience last night. Messages from liners at sea tell us how passengers listened to Melba far across the water.

June, 1920 (undated) : The longer I am at this job the

more I realise what a magnificent organisation was handed over to me by my predecessor Fish. He is no easy man to follow. I wonder if there is any job so exacting as that of News Editor of a national daily newspaper. I wonder how Fish stood it for so long. There is no game like the newspaper game, where you are so liable to be surprised by your rivals. You must be watching events ceaselessly and always thinking ahead. People talk of luck in tumbling across the news. Don't believe it. It's organisation, leaving nothing to chance, looking ahead, placing your men on the right spot and keeping them there despite lack of early results, putting your orders in writing, getting your reporters to set out in writing the questions about an event they want answering, and seeing that they get them answered. More good newspaper stories go astray through muddled conversational instructions to reporters than I care to think about. And persistence, too ! Recently for nearly two months we kept one man seeing daily a certain solicitor about a story we knew would eventually "break." The solicitor and our reporter got so sick of each other that they nearly came to blows. Other papers withdrew their men and trusted to luck that they would hear when the matter was ripe for publication. Our man was kept at it tactfully day after day, and eventually the great "scoop" fell into his basket, and the other papers no doubt wondered why. . . And behind all this driving and sleeplessness of his

editorial men is the Northcliffe giant, relentless in his demand for efficiency . . . and yet human enough to realise that men cannot keep up the pace all the time. Listen to this. The other Sunday night he rang me up. "How long have you been at this job, Tom?" "About seven months." "Have you been away for a holiday?" "Not yet." "Too long . . . too long. . . . No human being can stand it. If I find you there to-morrow there will be trouble. Where would you like to go for a holiday?" "France." "You leave to-morrow . . . a fortnight at least. Go to Biarritz or the Savoy and take your wife . . . at my expense. Who will do your work while you are away? Have you got anyone in training? Do you know that the sooner you can find someone to do your job the sooner you will be promoted? Some men are afraid of training others. They are afraid of losing their jobs. Those men never get on. . . . I am glad you said you would like to go to France." "Why, Chief?" "Because I offered to send one of your colleagues away for a holiday recently, and when I asked him where he would like to go he said — (mentioning a popular English seaside resort) or some such place—ha, ha, ha! He had been going there every year for twenty years. Newspapers need men who have travelled, who know the world. That man will never be a director . . . Well, get busy about your passports. You go home to-night and must not be seen near the office again for a fortnight. . . . I

will wire Pfister (our business director in Paris) to meet you there and arrange a tour in southern France. You will travel as my personal representative. . . ." So we went to Paris, and then on to Aix-les-Bains, Grenoble, and back to Annecy, and over the majestic Savoy Alps to Chamonix. At all hotels we were greeted with bouquets and placed in the most luxurious rooms. It was all Northcliffe's doing. We realised what a great hold he had in France. . . . On my return, the Chief was eager to know where I had been, whether I had been well looked after, and what I thought of our Paris office. I told him I had been impressed, not only by the Paris organisation, but also by the ramifications of his great business throughout southern France. "Yes," he replied, "and you have seen only one quarter of it. You shall go to the United States and see more of it. . . . Where have you travelled?" "China, Japan, Siberia, and various European countries." "But you have not been to the United States of America?" "No." "You shall go. . . . When do you take your holidays?" "But I have only returned to-day from a holiday." "That was an extra. I mean your official holiday." "In September." "Rather late for New York. We must try to let you away a little earlier. When does the *Imperator* sail? Let me know in the next few days. A week aboard her is a holiday in itself. I like to see people with an interest in the great world. Carmelite House does not travel half enough. The public

is right about armchair critics. Anyone who is interested in seeing something of our great organisation in other countries shall see it. That is why I have sent Douglas Crawford to New York. He likes to know. That is the sort of man I want. So many men do not want to travel." . . .

Friday, July 16, 1920 : The trade union extremists have been getting rid of some hot air about the British Government's attitude towards Ireland and Russia, and there have been hints of a move by workmen in newspaper offices to refuse to print news on these subjects that is not according to their tastes. The Chief is up in arms. There will be no strike, but a lock-out, he says in a message to his workers. "Rather than have my hands forced about Ireland or Russia I am prepared to shut down all my newspapers for a year if necessary. I can soon build them up again."

July 18, 1920 : The Chief is angry at the Government control of the railways and the way the holiday trains are being arranged. He says the arrangements are not fair to the public. So to-night he telephoned me from Broadstairs as follows : "We have got the Government in a cleft stick—exactly where we want them. The line to take in to-morrow's paper is 'Millions of Votes may be Lost. Government alarmed at Sir E. Geddes's Holiday Tax.' I am perfectly certain I would bring these people off their perch in three days. There must be a leading article and two columns on the main

page, with a turn-over to somewhere else. The contents bill must be 'Government Alarm at Holiday Tax Agitation.' " . . . I lunched to-day with Sir Campbell Stuart at 20 Eaton Square to discuss the plans for my forthcoming visit to the United States, and to arrange some wireless telephony tests with Sir Campbell when he sails for Canada in a few days. . . . After the tremendous interest aroused by the success of our Melba concert, Northcliffe's interest seemed to quicken, and he had a seven-valve wireless receiving set fitted up for his private use at *The Times* office. He is very proud of it, and makes a point of showing it to his visitors. He has a special operator for the instrument. This operator came to me the other day and said, "Lord Northcliffe is a funny bloke. He came in one day last week and said to me, 'Have you any brains?' I said I had, and he went on, 'Then tell me all about wireless.' When he brings visitors to see the set he says to them, 'This is the very latest in wireless,' and then he says to me, 'You explain it.' " From what I can make out, the Chief is rather suspicious about wireless in general. He does not know what its effect is going to be on the transmission and the distribution of news. He says the great drawback to it is the lack of secrecy. "Your tests are showing that anyone who cares can be an eavesdropper. Can they eliminate the wireless eavesdropper and ensure secrecy for messages? That's the thing for Marconi to solve."

CHURCHILL DID WRITE IT!

July 26, 1920 : We published to-day an announcement that Winston Churchill had promised to write an article for to-morrow's *Evening News*. Churchill rang up on seeing the announcement and said he would not do the article. When the Chief was told this he rang me up and said, "Churchill must do it. Send a good man to him at once and tell him he cannot make the *Daily Mail* look ridiculous." There was a bit of coming and going about the matter, but Churchill wrote the article.

August 5, 1920 : The Chief has got an inspiration for a great new holiday competition. His idea is that the thousands of children at the seaside who spend their time making designs in the sand should make their designs in the form of advertisements of the huge net sales of the *Daily Mail*. This is what he said to me this morning, "Think out very carefully, and formulate, a scheme for offering 1,000 prizes for the best arrangements of the words '*Daily Mail*,' and 'World's record net sale of 1,121,790,' in sand or stone or other devices, at the seaside or in the country where children are on holiday. I expect there will be a lot of trouble about it. All the young people of England will be doing it, and we shall hear from landowners and others about disfiguring their property and the countryside. . . . Sir Andrew Caird will be on my track, too, about offering £1,000 in prizes," he chuckled. "But let me have your full scheme by eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, all set up in type. Get a legal man to look at the

conditions. Otherwise we shall leave a trap somewhere."

Friday, August 6, 1920 : I stayed at the office till midnight drawing up the Holiday Competition announcement, and duly presented myself at *The Times* office this morning to keep the Chief's appointment. There was no fear of my forgetting the matter, for when I was in my bath at 7 o'clock this morning he rang me up to know if I had worked out the plan. His room at *The Times* office was untidy with papers and littered with photographs. A young woman was sorting out the latter, and the Chief talked to her and to me at the same time. "Show me your scheme, Tom. . . . Now, my dear [to the young lady], clear out all the drawers and do what you like with the photographs. . . . What's this? One Thousand Prizes for Boys and Girls. Not boys and girls. Call them Young People. They don't like being called children or boys and girls. . . . I said the first prize was to be £100. Why have you not made it so?" "It's rather a lot of money for a youngster, and . . ." "Say no more. You are right. You know why I am offering these prizes—to start the young people of this country early in the *Daily Mail* habit. . . . Do you know what the *Daily Mail* death-rate is?" I was not quite sure what he meant. "I mean," he went on, "do you know how many readers of our paper die every year? I have had it worked out. Our death-rate is 5 per cent. per annum. Here on *The Times* it is as much as 10 per cent. The readers are older.

That is a great problem. We have got to make good with new readers every year. Those new readers must of necessity be young people. . . . How are you getting on with those photographs, my dear? . . . You'll have to expect trouble with this competition. The designers will be getting on everybody's land. Won't there be some rare fun? It will be the talk of the whole country. . . . These young people we are after are the newspaper readers of the next generation. When they think of newspapers they will think *Daily Mail*. Some people don't like our 'Teddy Tail' feature. They ask me why I give up so much space to an absurdity. They do not understand. It gets the children to know the paper, to demand it from their mothers and fathers. And we must think of getting fresh animals into it—monkeys and so on. Ask your women friends for advice about that. They understand children much better than men. You know why I ran the great Boy Scouts' Jamboree . . . the same reason. It put our paper in the hands of thousands of future buyers of newspapers and gave them a sort of affection for it. Make your contents bill to-morrow—and there must be only one; never mind what other news there is—'£1,100 HOLIDAY PRIZES.' That will make Sir Andrew sit up. I daresay he will want to have a go at it. . . ." We then talked of my forthcoming trip across the Atlantic as follows :

He : You ought to have a companion with you. . . . Take Tom Webster. Ring him up when you get back

to the office and tell him he's to go with you. . . . So you are sailing in the *Imperator* on the 28th? You know certain people in Carmelite House are complaining of these 'millionaire trips' for the young men of the staff. Take no notice. That is my business. They are worried about not being able to fill your places. What cities are you going to visit?

I: I thought of New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington.

He: Don't go rushing about in trains and making yourself ill. What do you want to go wasting your time in Baltimore for? You will give great offence if you do not visit Canada. It is a mistake made by many English people. So far as the United States is concerned, you should get to know one city properly. You have not time for more than one. And that city is New York. Spend at least seven days there. Then go on to Montreal. You had better also go to Toronto. See Sir John Willison there, *The Times* correspondent. Get him to take you to one of his nice clubs. Then you must see Niagara. It is silly to go to America and miss it. Motor there through the fruit district, not by train. Sleep a night at Niagara. You must see the falls by night as well as by day. . . . Boston, yes; you can take it in on your way back to New York. Washington—well, if you have time you might run up there. I will see you have a letter to the Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes.

I: What's the hotel to stay at in New York?

ALTHOUGH I PUBLICLY INTIMATED THAT I DID NOT WANT LETTERS TWO ARRIVED
HERE THIS MORNING, ONE FROM JUNIOR STAFF MEMBER WITH GRIEVANCE, WERE HE OLDER
SHOULD DISMISS HIM FOR INTRUSION ~~STOP~~ OTHER FROM WIFE OF MEMBER OF ONE OF
MY STAFFS COMPLAINING OF HUSBANDS PECCADILLOES, ACCOMPANIED BY NUMEROUS
ENCLOSURES, HAVE BURNT THE LOT. WILL HUSBANDS KINDLY INFORM THEIR WIVES
THAT I ALWAYS DO THIS, I WONDER IF THESE SELFISH LONDON FOLK WHO TROUBLE
ME WHEN I AM HERE REALISE THAT, INCLUDING AMALGAMATED PRESS CONTRIBUTORS
FASHION ARTISTS AND WRITERS PARIS STAFF OF THE TIMES, VARIOUS STAFFS OF

PART OF A TELEGRAM FROM NORTHCLIFFE TO THE AUTHOR

He : In New York the newest hotels are always the best. We must consult Louis Tracy. He knows. Also W. F. Bullock [our New York correspondent], who is arriving in England this week-end in the *Olympic*.

I : I suppose I shall not have time to get to Detroit to look up Henry Ford ?

He : Hardly. Ford ? He is the only millionaire I have met with brains—except *me* [with a chuckle].

I : It is really very good of you, Chief, to plan such a wonderful trip for me.

He : There is no goodness about it. That is nonsense. I want men in responsible posts on my staff to know the world, and to know it as the well-to-do people know it. I want you to have the best of everything on this trip. All this is in the interests of my business. You will be worth far more to my business when you return. For one thing, you will learn not to write or talk this “ blood thicker than water ” nonsense about the United States. You will learn that it only offends people over there. The Americans look upon it as a relic of the old Colonial days. Why, New York has over one million Jews—Russian, German, and Austrian. It has also about half a million Italians. . . . This costly visit of yourself and Tom Webster to the United States will add two people to my staff who know something of the country. It will help us avoid a lot of the nonsense that gets in the British papers—including our own—about the United States. . . . Mark that I say United States

Never write of America. That is an obscurity which also betrays ignorance. There are two Americas—north and south. If you talk to a Spaniard about America, he thinks you mean South America. You are going to the United States of America. . . . I wish our staff travelled more. Our better-class readers travel, on the average, far more than our staff.

He changed the subject: "Who has stopped those amusing articles about the Mixed Bathing Inspector? It is too early to stop them. They must be continued." He was referring to a series of articles by one Councillor Donald Clark, of Tonbridge. This gentleman some weeks ago made a speech violently denouncing the ugly shamelessness of the bathing men and girls on our summer beaches. He said he was going to visit more seaside places. The Chief mentioned the matter in passing in a talk about news one day, and half-jestingly I said we ought to commission the councillor to go round the seaside resorts and write his views of what the bathing costumes were, and what he thought they should be. "Capital," cried the Chief. "Arrange it at once. Plan a tour and pay all his expenses. Send a first-class reporter with him to help him. Announce it to-morrow. Call him 'The Mixed Bathing Inspector.' Announce the places he is going to visit. Everybody will be on the look-out for him. Send a photographer, too. Plenty of pictures of pretty bathing girls. It will be one of the best holiday-season features

we have had for years." So until a few days ago Councillor Clark has been touring north, south, east, and west on his quest. It has produced much amusing copy. One or twice angry bathers who have recognised him have come near ducking him. The articles have produced some little controversy in the office. Some of the older school say they are not only frivolous, but also getting near the pornographic. Why should we associate ourselves with the silly outpourings of a prejudiced old man, and encourage him to go prying about the beaches at our young women? It is true that, while most folk took the articles with good humour, we received quite a number of letters of protest. "That shows it's a talking point," was the Chief's comment. "It is a good summer controversy." Anyhow, when the articles began to have a sameness I thought the time had come to stop them, so the Councillor was recalled. Now the Chief has started him off again. "Everybody is reading these articles," he says, "and it is wrong to stop them yet." I rather suspect he has done this as a deliberate move in his campaign for brightness in the paper. "*We* must not become *too* respectable," he is always saying.

Saturday, August 29, 1920 : Aboard Cunard R.M.S. *Imperator*. Tom Webster and I left Southampton at noon to-day on our American trip. We are both chuckling over a message the Chief sent us to spend as much money as possible and then come home. He advises us

to keep clear of shell-fish and ordinary drinking-water, and thus insure against typhoid and ptomaine poisoning.

We look like having a right royal time. The captain, gallant Charles Smith, has been "suitably communicated with" about us. Our state-room, with private bath, has cost the office £100 apiece for us. That makes £400 for our passage there and back. We are armed with £100 each to begin with for expenses, and Douglas Crawford in New York has been instructed to advance more if required. We have more letters of introduction to statesmen, newspaper owners, and private people than we can ever hope to present—from the Ambassador to Walter Hagen, from Cyrus H. Curtis to a lady of Society with a wonderful house on Long Island. . . . Last Monday Northcliffe gave a little farewell luncheon-party at his house in Carlton Gardens. Sir Andrew Caird was there ("to listen to us talk about all the money you are going to spend," said the Chief), also James B. Regan, an American visitor, formerly the "big noise" of the Knickerbocker Hotel, New York. I arrived first, and awaited the Chief in the "green room," chiefly interested in an extraordinary picture of a kitchen, with all the eatables ready for cooking—salmon, chicken, and so on . . . possibly hung in this ante-chamber to the luncheon-room to give his guests an appetite. A new portrait of the Queen, signed "Mary," stood on a little table, which also held the Chief's ivory-handled telephone receiver. . . . The

Chief came in with Regan, who displayed great interest when the Chief said I was shortly leaving for New York. "And it's your virgin voyage?" said Regan. "Well, I guess it will be the biggest sensation of your life." The Chief butted in to say that he had crossed the Atlantic fifty times, and he went quite chilly for a moment when Regan said, "Well, I've done seventy trips." We passed into the luncheon-room, with its soft blue walls and lovely paintings. "It's only a simple luncheon," says the Chief, "eggs, veal, grouse, and tart." We drink white wine. The talk takes us round the world. Now it is of Sir Percival Perry, of Slough fame, of whom the Chief says, "He is a marvellous young man. I only hope he is not taking on too much. He is not physically strong." Then we talk of hotels, and Regan complains of the way the London hotels fleece the American visitors. "Give me your hotel bill and I will print it in full," interrupts Northcliffe. "That will stop it." "Your lordship could do anything," smiles Regan—without producing the hotel bill. So the talk comes to New York, of which place the Chief seems to have very close knowledge. He emphasises the growth of golf interest there. "Why," he says, "there is even a golf club for Jews. Fancy that now, a special golf club for Jews. I hope Tracy is giving you letters to some of the nice New York clubs, the Lotus and the Yacht Club, Tom. You'll find they don't know anything of big daily newspaper sales like ours in the

United States. They are amazed at our figures. . . . Of course, this net sale of ours is really something very wonderful. What is it now, Tom—nearly thirteen hundred thousand a day? How can we stop it?”

Northcliffe remembers something that Regan has forgotten, and Regan says, “What a wonderful memory you have.”

The Chief: I never forget. Once I sacked a man, and ten years later I read something in the paper which I remembered as in the style of that man. They told me I was mistaken; that the article was from some fellow in San Francisco. I had the thing rooted out, and I was right. It was the same man, even though the article was from San Francisco.

After a little more talk about New York hotels—the Chief telling me to stay at the Commodore as a typical first-class American hotel—the party broke up with a remark from our host, “Well, we must all get back to work.” The Chief took Caird and myself back to Carmelite House in his car. As Regan drove off in a scrumptious limousine, the Chief turned to me and said, “Now you see what a different sort of person the hotel man is in New York. Regan is quite a social man.” And then, while my mind wanted to wander across the ocean to consider the new adventure that was coming my way, Northcliffe switched on to a new and disagreeable subject—the threatened coal strike in England.

As our car sped across Trafalgar Square he said,

"The bill to-morrow is 'ALL THE COAL NEWS,' and the day after that, 'WIVES AND THE COAL THREAT.' I know how to stop this strike. I have it all planned out—all the contents bills for days ahead. What you've got to do is to excite the public about it. Give them all the coal news. . . . Do you know, too, that a good many wives of journalists are worried about their husbands getting mixed up in trade unionism? The women fear a strike. They write to me about it. . . . I get some most extraordinary letters from wives of my staff on all subjects. They tell me all their secrets—all about their husbands. They bring all their troubles to me. One wife came storming to me one day. 'I have proofs of my husband's infidelity,' she said. I put the letter she gave me in the fire, and said, 'Now go, madam. Please don't expect me to waste time listening to your silly talk.' "

As he bade me good-bye on the steps of Carmelite House the Chief said, "Every young man ought to go to the United States, Tom. But it is ridiculous to rush it. You have my authority to extend your stay for at least a fortnight longer than you have arranged. Enjoy your holiday to the full . . . you won't be able to escape the news altogether when at sea. They publish a daily newspaper aboard the *Imperator*. Look into that matter and let me know what you think of it. Find out all about it."

* * *

Tom Webster and I had a good time and a full time in the United States. Northcliffe's magic introductions

opened every door to us, and we got the full measure of that country's amazing hospitality, public and private. At the end of a week's junketing and sightseeing in New York I flung Northcliffe's suggestions as to my itinerary to the winds and took the Twentieth Century Limited to the Middle West in search of repose. I found it with the family of my friend Dr. Darwin M. Keith at Rockford (Illinois), a typical go-ahead country town about seventy miles farther on than Chicago. Webster had remained in New York. A week of it had left him bewildered and homesick. "No," he had said one night as he stood watching the illuminated Wrigley Kids on Broadway, "I am not coming West with you. When I leave this city I'm going straight home." I returned to New York via Canada, to find Tom more homesick than ever. He had been drawn into doing some cartoons for New York papers, and, as he took his work very seriously he was not getting the rest he needed. I felt a little guilty at having left him. I told him of the things I had done and the places I had seen, and said he ought to get a move on, especially as he was supposed to be visiting Hollywood, but first of all I advised him to make a bee-line for Rockford and Dr. Keith and take a week's rest in a nice American home, away from cartooning and the weary round of prizefighters and film and theatre folk in New York. He declined to budge. We went to the top of the Woolworth Building together. When we got out of the lift, Tom declined to come to the

railings and look from the dizzy height. He put his hand over his face and bolted back to the lift. "I can't do it," he said. "I can't look down there. Why do they do these things? This blessed city scares me. Give me London." I had to go to Washington to see the Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes. I could not persuade Tom to join me. Incidentally, my silk hat did not go either. I had borne this symbol of British respectability across the Atlantic, much to the amusement of baggage-men, because the Chief had advised me that one ought always to be prepared for the emergency of formality, even in the United States. An Embassy secretary, however, who telephoned from Washington to remind me of my appointment, must have heard of that hat, and with the utmost tact he indicated that its presence was not necessary. The only occasion it emerged from its case was on the return journey across the Atlantic, when it was loaned to General Seely as an adornment for his make-up at the fancy-dress ball.

In the meantime, Northcliffe had sent me a cable. It ran: "If you want to stay longer, do." It also asked if I wanted any more money. Now I knew something of the Chief's little ways with these cables. He had once told me with an impish laugh that he could find out a lot about a man by sending a telegram telling him to prolong his holiday. "It makes him wonder if someone better has been found to do his job. If he's afraid of losing his job he comes back quick. There are men I

can get back at work in no time with a telegram like that." I'm afraid I was enjoying my holiday so much that I didn't stop to consider the workings of the Chief's mind regarding me, and I promptly and joyfully, in a "damn-the-consequences" mood, took the telegram at its face value and said to Tom Webster: "That settles it. I'm cancelling my sailing to-morrow." I sent word to headquarters indicating that I was extending my holiday, especially as I had persuaded Tom to come back with me to Rockford for a much-needed rest and change. I don't think Tom was aware how much I intended trading on him if I had been criticised for not interpreting the Chief's message to me as one of his backhand ways of telling me my holiday had lasted long enough. By the time I was due to sail for England, Tom had so much come to like the United States that *he* now decided to stay longer. He was an extraordinarily popular figure wherever he went, and a delightful travelling companion, whose quaint comments on things shortened all long journeys. When we could not escape making speeches, we always remembered the Chief's hint to keep off politics and controversy and Ireland. So we usually fell to panegyrics about America's "wonderful women," which always went down well. ("So well groomed," I think one of Tom's speeches ran, "that even the New York typists look as if they had two baths every morning.") Many of the newspaper people believed our visit was concerned with

some Northcliffian newspaper enterprise in the States ; and, when we repudiated this, they would say : “ Go on ! When are you going to start up here ? ” What most Americans best liked, however, in speech and conversation, was the “ big stuff.” May I be forgiven for any exaggerations I inflicted on my American friends, but always in my mind was something the Chief whispered to me before I left London : “ Don’t forget, Tom, that immediately you leave Southampton you are going to the greatest country in the world—the land of big ideas, big men, big business, big talk, big buildings, big everything. You have got to speak with wide-eyed admiration : you’ve got to be impressed with all this bigness and drive : you’ve seen nothing like it ; unbelievable ; thrilling ; 100 per cent. everything. As long as you are among Americans, they and their country are the biggest things that ever happened. . . . Of course, you can forget it all immediately you set foot in Southampton again.”

During the voyage home I sorted out all my experiences and impressions and prepared my report for the Chief. It told of New York’s absence of chimney-pots, motor-cycles, and public clocks ; of the contrast between the most generous hospitality of individual Americans and the inexplicable mass irritation against the British that one sensed rather than felt ; of the job we were going to find it to preserve American friendship ; of the prosperity of the country, of which the well-dressed women everywhere were a sure index ; of

HORRIBLE HOOCH !

the way Americans were learning to play, and how England's amateurs would have to look to their lawn tennis and golf laurels ; of the Prohibition farce and the horrible bootleg "hooch" which was pushed at us ; of the factory chimneys that spoiled Niagara ; of wireless and the signs of its popular development—and so on. Dealing purely with newspaper affairs, I reported, perhaps with too much nonchalance, that we had little to learn from our New York and Chicago friends except about office furniture, which was certainly better than in most English newspaper offices ; and that my opinion was confirmed by some of our technical staff whom I had met holiday-making in New York ; they had told me there was "nothing to beat" in the American newspaper offices. As for the daily paper published aboard the Atlantic liner, I suggested it would be quite practicable to publish an ocean edition of the *Daily Mail*.

There was one of my colleagues at Carmelite House who greeted my return with special congratulations. He was inclined to occasional lugubriousness, and when he heard I was being sent to the United States he said : "Well, I hope it's all right, old man ; but you know what trips of that sort are supposed to mean. . . ." And he forced a wry wink. "Well," I laughed, "I know what you mean ; but if the Chief is going to give me the *congé*, he'll give it me whether I go to America or not, so, whether I'm going to get the boot or

not, I'll make sure of the trip to America anyhow."

"Hallo—well—you *have* come back then," said my friend, on seeing me again. "In your case, then, America is not the bourn from which no traveller returns."

November 1, 1920 : Northcliffe had me out at a luncheon-party at Carlton Gardens on my return from the American tour. To my surprise, he scarcely spoke a word to me beyond saying, "I know how bewildered you must feel after all this. You must settle down before you go back to the office. Don't come in for at least three days." When I did get back into harness, I walked into a whirlwind about the *Daily Mail* hat. I remembered getting first news of this amazing attempt to change a nation's headgear in the shape of a wireless message for the news columns of the daily paper published aboard the *Imperator*. The message that the *Mail* had found the perfect hat for mankind caused great amusement among passengers on the broad Atlantic, and I felt dubious about the whole business. Such fears were justified on reaching Carmelite House again. The thing was going badly. The public refused to be ordered about on the matter of hats. Were it the best hat in the world, given away free, people would not risk ridicule by wearing it. Northcliffe, who hated failure, was angrily lashing out at all and sundry in the office who had the remotest connection with the stunt. He complained to me of the "bad taste" of our propaganda, and told me to get some fresh minds on to it.

I gathered that he was referring to a proud announcement that the *Daily Mail* hat had been observed on men's heads at, among other places, Mile End. That was not to his liking at all. He wanted it in the West End. He had sent suave reporters to persuade men-about-town to sport the hat, and had roped in ex-King Manoel and one or two others, and had sent a "free copy" to Winston Churchill (which Winston has apparently added to his *unused* collection). Our Lobby correspondent himself wears the hat, and has succeeded in getting one or two M.P.s to follow his example. Some of the fellows in the office, especially ambitious youths looking for promotion, who have heard the Chief's jesting threat to have a Carmelite House hat inspection, wear a *Daily Mail* hat on duty, but keep a less conspicuous article in which to travel home to their distant suburb. I hope the Chief doesn't ask me if I am wearing one. I simply haven't the courage. He tells me there are a lot of bad hats about which are doing the campaign harm. He has gone to Paris wearing a fine specimen. At least, he wore it at Victoria, but I hear he had changed it before he left Calais. Still, here one is, with a mass of instructions to try to rescue the hat from ruin. We must get Curnock at it again as hat organiser.

November (undated) : Winston Churchill has reviewed Mrs. Asquith's book. The Chief said a lot of money was being paid for the article, and called for a proof. Then he telephoned me that it wanted more ginger,

and would I send someone to tell Winston so. Smith, our Lobby man, was given this awkward commission. He said Winston at first seemed very annoyed, and ready to let the whole thing go hang, but eventually he made a few alterations. I think Northcliffe is annoyed because Winston does not wear his *Daily Mail* hat.

November 2, 1920 : The Chief is worrying again about our social news. He has never been able to get our "Court, Society, and Personal" as he wants it. He will not have the "gossip column" some people have been urging upon him, but he feels we ought to have more *news* of the social bigwigs in the paper—not charity puffs or inane stuff about "I hear that Lady X——" and so on. Not long ago he asked me to offer £30 a week for the right man to get us the sort of news he wanted ; later he said, "Increase it to £40." He said the man he wanted must have a light style, with a complete knowledge of the peerage, baronetage, landed gentry, naval and military personalities, Society folk generally, and of the racing, theatre, and hunting worlds. A junior member of my staff, in an outbreak of pushful ambition, applied for the job and got it. He lasted two weeks. The Chief, however, in recognition of his "courage," increased his salary, although he relieved him of the social job. Northcliffe always liked a trier. In July, before I went to America, he wrote to me : "What the paper wants is a Man-About-Town.

Manning Foster, whom I have known for twenty years, is the sort of man for the post in the hands of a clever news editor."

November 3, 1920 : Two things that struck me during my American journey, which I have reported to the Chief, were the American interest in wireless on its popular side and the newspaper published with a page of wireless news aboard the liner. A fellow-passenger was S. J. Nally, President of the Radio Corporation of America. In New York I lunched with him and other leaders of radio, and I was surprised by the questions they asked me about our Melba wireless concert. The *Wireless Age* published a two-page interview on this "epochal achievement belonging to the other side of the Atlantic." Feeling sure that this "broadcasting" business is going to boom and fire the public imagination, I told the Chief that we can't let matters rest where they are, and we ought to think out new enterprises to follow the Melba concert. Northcliffe does not appear to be unduly enthusiastic. I have had no reply to a suggestion that we should organise for the next holiday season a series of *Daily Mail* wireless concerts. We could get artists to sing at Writtle or some other transmitting station near London, and, by installing voice magnifiers at different seaside resorts, could have holiday audiences listening, maybe, on piers, assembly rooms, and possibly in pleasure steamers, at distances up to two hundred miles. . . . Nor has the

Chief yet opened his mind on the suggestion that the *Daily Mail* should explore the possibilities of publishing a daily newspaper aboard all the Atlantic liners. When on the *Imperator*, I acted, at the request of the captain, as editor of the ship's daily newspaper, the *Cunard Daily Bulletin*. It was great fun, although it meant being disturbed at all hours of night by the printer's devil with his wireless telegrams, which required sub-editing. I am told the paper pays its way and that the advertisement revenue covers cost of production. It is sold at threepence a copy, and is quite eagerly sought by passengers at breakfast time. The only sign I have had from the Chief on the matter is the remark, "We must be careful of side-shows." This followed a fishing reference I made to the effect that a Transatlantic edition of the *Daily Mail* would be another step in girdling the world with our paper. "We have the London *Daily Mail*, the Continental edition, which goes all over Europe, the Irish and northern editions, and the *Overseas Daily Mail*," I said. "Some day there might be an Australian edition, and perhaps a Canadian and American edition. With an Atlantic edition, the world would not be able to escape you. Everybody would get the *Daily Mail* habit. . . ." But I could not draw him. I think he is worrying about other things.

December 5, 1920 : The Chief is at loggerheads with the National Union of Journalists—for the second time this year. It is a pity this should be, for he has been a

real friend to the working journalist, and has given great encouragement to the union and its good and very necessary work. The previous trouble was in the summer—in July—when the Chief was at variance with the extreme views of some other trade unionists in the office. At that time there came like a red rag to a bull an allegation from a member of the union that some people on his papers were as badly paid as journalists on the financial papers. He rang me up in a rage. “Is it true?”—and there was no doubt in my mind as to how I should stand if it were, for one thing he did pride himself on was that he paid good salaries for good work. I said at once: “It is *not* true as far as I know. You are entitled to my resignation if it is.” It was his birthday. “I wanted to be at peace with everybody to-day,” he said, “and here comes this scandalous allegation. Look into it, Tom.” Very soon I was able to reassure him, and I believe members of the union in the office made it their business to express to him their anger at the allegation. All he said was, “Tell those who don’t like us to get out,” and the affair passed over. But I imagine it has rankled, because to-day the presentation by the National Union of Journalists of new wage demands and a programme for “grading” staffs has brought a vigorous statement from him that the demands are financially impossible, and he will close down his business if he is threatened. He feels that the extension of the union’s activities along trade union

JAM FACTORY JOURNALISM

lines is wrong, and tends to interfere with the proprietor's right of control. Members of the union are not solid on this new programme, and it is significant that a big meeting of the members last night declined to endorse the "extremist" demands. To-day the Chief, in conversation, said, "I think we have squelched these young lunatics of the N.U.J. I am not hostile to the union, but I object to our profession being vulgarised by jam factory ideas. Newspaper offices are not factories. These grading demands reduce journalists to jam factory level. We must print a report of that meeting, and head it 'JAM FACTORY JOURNALISM.' The public will like to read it. The public really take great interest in newspapers—in anything they know nothing about. I will also write a leader about 'Jam Factory Journalists.' Where would lots of us have been if these methods of excluding brains from our profession had been in vogue when we started? Think of the absurd idea of excluding anyone from starting if he is older than twenty-three. Where would Wickham Steed [Editor of *The Times*] have been? He was brought up as an accountant." . . .

A propos of all this is a story concerning Northcliffe's determination always to pay good wages. Some time ago a departmental head advertised for a girl at £1 a week. Blatchford saw the advertisement, and put a paragraph in the *Clarion*, I think, saying, "Now, then, Lord Northcliffe!" The Chief saw this, and rang up

the head of the department concerned, and the following exchanges took place :

Did you put this advertisement out ?—Yes, Chief.

One pound a week ?—Yes, Chief.

What do you mean by it ?—(No reply.)

What is your salary ?—(The amount was given.)

It will be £1 a week less in future. I have a good mind to sack you.

The Chief then rang up the next man above this departmental head.

You are responsible for so-and-so's department, aren't you ?—Yes, Chief.

Do you know he has advertised for a girl at £1 a week ?—Yes, Chief.

What do you mean by it ?—(No reply.)

I notice you have an application in for a rise.—Yes, Chief.

Consider it refused.—(No reply.)

Again the Chief got on the telephone to the cashier to have his orders put into immediate effect. " And," he added, " tell everyone what I have done. I shall ring up in an hour to know how many people you have told."

True to his word, he rang up an hour later :

How many people have you told ?—Nine, Chief.

" Continue the good work," was his parting shot.

December 6, 1920 : The Prince of Wales is to be entertained at luncheon at the Guildhall to-morrow on returning from his Empire tour. The list of guests contains

the names of many men of affairs, but the City has apparently overlooked Lord Northcliffe, and he is sore and suspicious about it. He rang me up to-day and said, "Someone has taken my name out. Do not say much in the paper about the lunch, either to-day or to-morrow. Don't give it any prominence, and then I shall have Buckingham Palace ringing me up to know why."

December (undated) : Another instance the other evening of the Chief's contempt for public men who "blame the reporter." A man of title who had obviously said more than was discreet in an interview with Budgen, a bright new youngster on the staff, rang up to ask for a denial. When I said I would send for the reporter and investigate the matter, he went into a great rage. I said we must in all fairness hear what the reporter had to say, but he went on, "I won't be treated like this. I'll let Lord Northcliffe know. He won't stand this sort of thing. I'll have it all reported to him." Almost the next moment Northcliffe came through on the telephone about another matter, and I took the opportunity of mentioning what had happened. "If he [mentioning the titled man] comes to me," said the Chief, "I will give him hell. Ring him up and tell him so. Whether or not the reporter is to blame, I won't have my reporters or anybody on my staff threatened. That has always been my rule. If the fellow approaches me he will regret it." There came a letter to the editor. The writer of it got short shrift.

CHAPTER X

RIVIERA LESSONS IN LIFE AND NEWS

My diary is rather empty for the next few months—bits of talk with Northcliffe here and there, with nothing much to link them up to. There are references to Lord Lee and exhortations to “keep off him”—some minor quarrel or other, I suppose ; a complaint about the general outlook (“I have to pay out a cheque for £80,000. How would *you* like that?”) ; a homily on Youth and Age (“Do you realise that every day we are growing older, and that our young people are not travelling enough? I am not travelling enough. Thirty years and I had been to America, India, and Russia. I do not seem to get away now. I want people at Carmelite House to get about more”) ; and another on the valuable publicity given us when our rivals attack us (“Better be blackguarded than ignored”).

In January 1921, after getting the figures of the increasing sales of his paper, he went to renew his energy in the south of France at his Villa Roquebrune, near Cap Martin. He returned suddenly and unexpectedly in a fortnight, and surprised everybody by walking into our morning conference, which was being held in the small Room Three instead of the big Room One.

RUMOUR OF NORTHCLIFFE'S DEATH

"Why are you holding conference here?" he protested. "Little rooms, little men . . . I suppose you thought the 'old man,' as I hear I am called, was out of the way. Well, I'm not dead yet."

This was a sly reference to a report of his death that had been circulated during his absence. The rumour was that he had been killed in a motor smash near Monte Carlo, and it caused quite a deal of excitement in Fleet Street the Saturday afternoon it came through. Directors came hurrying from the golf links to town, and Carmelite House was bombarded with telephone inquiries.

What Northcliffe said about it all was contained in the messages I received, one on a postcard, the other a letter. The card bore a picture of Monte Carlo Bay, with the site of Villa Roquebrune marked, "Where the Old Man is." On the other side was a message to the effect that the local papers announced his demise, and when he entered the lunch-room at Nice Golf Club the people almost fell off their perches. "Love to the N.U.J. . . . Chief," it concluded. The letter which followed said he heard that in certain newspaper offices the rumour of his death was rather that of "The wish is father to the thought," and that loud cries of "Now we shan't be long" went up in those establishments.

He gave a few of us a luncheon-party at Carlton Gardens. He talked of threatened friction between Britain and the United States about the Pacific Island

of Yap. (He had seen Sir Auckland Geddes, our Ambassador at Washington, the night before.)

"I do not think," said Northcliffe, "that we are being frank enough about Anglo-American relations. The time has come to speak out. I will start to-morrow—in a small way at first. We have ready an article about Senator Harding, the new President. I will write an introduction to it, pointing out the need for frankness in the relations between our two countries."

During the talk it was mentioned that one of our reporters was to visit a certain distinguished personage next day for an interview, and the Chief said, "Of course, Tom, you will send him in a nice editorial car." I told him we had no such contraption. "What," he cried, looking both annoyed and astonished, "is there no office car for use on such occasions? There ought to be a first-class closed car available for reporters all through the day. Tell Sir Andrew Caird from me to arrange for one at once. Do you realise that the prestige of our whole business depends on the way we do these things? The paper is judged by its representative and the way he travels. When people meet a *Daily Mail* reporter they say, 'That is the *Daily Mail*.' That is why I insist on the employment of well-dressed reporters."

The reporter went in a Rolls-Royce as the Chief instructed, and pulled off a scoop. "I suppose," said Northcliffe to me later, "our rivals were on the doormat."

Again, he would talk to me of natural history *news*, for which he had an extraordinary enthusiasm—news about animals, birds, fish, flowers, and so on ; all part of his aim to catch young folk as newspaper readers. Among animals, he showed a preference for news about wolves. He loved the very word, and his lips appeared to caress it as he lingered on the first vowel. I think he must have read many wolf stories when he was a small boy.

Although Northcliffe believed in the closest liaison between departments in the interests of general efficiency, he was very much against one department interfering, whether deliberately or accidentally, with the work of another it did not understand. He would not, for instance, let his "periodical men" tell him how to run his newspapers, or his "newspaper men" tell him how to run his periodicals. "They are quite different jobs, calling for quite different knowledge," he would say. Hence we at Carmelite House looked on his Amalgamated Press people (who produced his magazines, fashion periodicals, comic papers, and so on) as belonging to a world we did not understand. We saw little of them. For the same reason, Northcliffe jumped on any editorial man who "butted in" on advertising, or any advertisement man who "butted in" on editorial matters. He had, of course, always urged that the best men were those who tried to get an understanding of the inner workings of all other

departments, and learned the art of team-work and co-operation. He had no use for the old-time editorial pomposity, which looked down on such departments as circulation, advertising, and production. But, while he insisted on this co-operation, he deprecated one department doing anything which might affect the interests of another without consulting it. I had an amusing instance of this in February 1921. In trying to do what I thought was a good turn to our advertisement department I put both my feet well into a mess. One day, a man travelling to town with me in the train complained that his wife had cut out of the *Mail* some of the advertisements and woman's page matter and it had spoiled the paper for him. I at once wrote a little story headed "Wives' Own," pointing out how valuable the paper was to the housewife. A day or two later the Chief sent me a nasty knuckle-rap from the Riviera. He said the story I had written was a terrible "howler," and should have been submitted to the advertisement department. "I wonder," he went on, "what it will cost the business. I have said repeatedly that no reference to our sale or our advertisement of the paper should ever be made by the editorial department. They know nothing of such matters."

But, to soften matters, he signed the letter, "Your attached Chief," and added an invitation to go and spend a holiday with him at his Riviera villa at Cabbé-Roquebrune.

AT THE VILLA ROQUEBRUNE

March 24, 1921 : I am sitting at the close of day on a broad balcony. There are breakers on a beach below, which cannot be seen for the intervening groves and scented gardens. A troubadour has just been singing there. Far across the bay, tops of buildings and pinnacles make a fantastic mass in silhouette against the faint glow of the nearly dead day. And now little holes of light bob here and there about the falling curtain of night. Monte Carlo is waking up for the glamorous evening. A footstep, and a quiet voice, "Better than Fleet Street, eh, Tom?" It is the Chief. This grandstand for the Riviera pageant is the Villa Roquebrune. I am learning something about Northcliffe as host as well as employer. Other members of the house-party finish their *apéritif* and join us on the verandah. Here is my chum Harold Pemberton, son of the novelist, and one of our very best reporters. With him is a big, hefty Australian, as jolly and mischievous as a school-boy—Keith Murdoch, who directs the Australian United Cable Service in London. As he is housed in *The Times* office, he comes in frequent touch with Northcliffe, who has developed a warm personal regard for him which augurs well for Murdoch's future. Also in the party, which is of course really a "shop" affair to discuss the problems of the newspaper game, are W. J. Evans (Director and Editor-in-Chief of the *Evening News*), whom the Chief describes as the highest paid newspaper man in the world : F. G. Fisher (Chief

Sub-editor of the *Mail*) ; W. L. Warden, Paris office ; and E. H. Curtis, Manchester office.

When we arrived at Mentone yesterday, the Chief met us with his Rolls-Royce, and as we rode to the villa he said to me : " Did the financial pundits in London fix you boys up all right ? I ordered them to book you by the Riviera express, the finest and most luxurious train in the world, and to advance £50 each and no questions asked. Of course, that won't go far here." He turned to Evans : " I have brought these boys to this most expensive place in the world and do not mean to let it cost them a single penny. See to it that they pay for nothing. You can render the account to me." Pemberton and I chuckled quietly over all this, and Evans didn't look any too comfortable. The rumour goes that the Chief is apt to be forgetful about accounts of this sort submitted by what he calls his " money-logged directors," and that it is his way of having a good joke at their hard-cash expense. However, that is not our affair, and all in the garden looks sweet and fair to us. It was before luncheon yesterday when we arrived at the villa, a magnificent place of marble halls, terraces, and gardens. The Chief's French chef joined in the plot to make us feel like millionaires by preparing the most delicious repast, and after that we sat on the terrace in the sun, the blue bay below us, and Northcliffe talked. He waved a chubby hand towards the sun and said, " The source of all

energy. Is not this a most wonderful spot? Clean, good air, the sun—and the finest sanitary system in the world. I cannot understand why people with the means and the leisure stay and suffer the English weather at this time of year when this is only a day's journey away."

"Have you bought this lovely villa?" someone asked.

"No. Fools build villas for wise men to live in. . . . You boys must be careful of the cold nights. Watch the natives when you are in a strange land. They all wear coats at night here. They *know*. I never catch cold because I wear woollen and silk underclothing, and I never go out without an overcoat. I am undergoing a sort of vaccination treatment for my throat, and I have to be careful. I shall not be at dinner to-night, as the doctor is coming to give me treatment. The Rolls-Royce will be ready for you boys at 9.15 every night. I never stay up late, but I want you to see all the life here, at the Casino and elsewhere. Take the car where you will. Pine, the chauffeur, knows his way about and speaks French. I ask no questions as to what time you come in so long as you do not wake me up. You will find a drink always in the hall." To-night he asked me to go up to talk to him as he lay in bed. It was 7.30, and he was not coming down to dinner. As is his custom, he had the head of the bed towards the window. Sitting up in woollen night clothes, he talked of trifles.

He asked how much I had lost at the Casino the previous night. "I never go there," he said. "I have not been there for years. But I want you boys to go. To see the idle rich, as they are called, at play, and to be able to enter the show on equal terms, is to help you to understand things better. A newspaper man should *know*, and know by experience. Make the best of it. . . . What strikes you about Monte Carlo?" "The number of respectable old ladies and gentlemen. Relatively there is quite an absence of young people." "They can't afford it," he said. "Evans would say it is quite just that it should be so—that this is the gilded prize dangled before youth as the fruit of hard work or brains." "But," I said, "these respectable old folk have won their prizes too late to enjoy them." He looked at me quizzically. He was very tired. "Hurry off to dinner now, Tom, and enjoy yourself. Stop! Did you lose money at the Casino last night? That is not fair. I am paying for your experience, and you mustn't lose any of *your* money there. I will instruct my secretary to let you young men have some money every night—100 francs or so—to spend on the tables. Ask him for it. If you win, get your wife a new dress. If you lose, stop when you've lost your 100 francs. But don't waste *your* money there. The place bores me."

The Casino bores me too. I soon lost my first 100 francs. Pemberton made a bit out of his. But Evans, finding a five-franc "chip" on the floor, and, starting

with that, made about 800 francs. To them that hath——

Saturday, March 26, 1921 : Out walking to-day on the terrace, the Chief stopped to talk to Lord Cowdray, and, introducing me, said, "This is Lord Cowdray, Tom. He finds it easier to make money out of oil than newspapers" (a sly reference to the *Westminster Gazette*). He told me he and Lord Cowdray were to dine to-night with the King of Sweden, who is staying in Monte Carlo. To-night, as some of us were starting off from the villa for our adventures in the town, we met the Chief returning. It was 9.15. Very early to leave a king's table, I thought. "A dull fellow, the King," muttered the Chief to me as he passed from the Corniche road to his villa, and bed. Even kings cannot alter his rule of being in bed before 9.30.

Monday, March 28, 1921 : We all drove up for golf at Mont Agel to-day. Curtis and I were in the Chief's car, and as we plodded up the steep, winding road to the hill-top, the Chief said, "Now look at Curtis. He is a wealthy man. I marvel that he has not been here before. How much do you think he gets, Tom?" I felt as uncomfortable as Curtis looked, and I said, "Oh, about as much as I hope to get one day." "No, no. How much do you think?" I took a shot, and Northcliffe laughed merrily. "Nearer three times that amount," he said. "He is a man who has never made a mistake. But you are getting older, you know, Curtis."

He then talked about a lunch we had had at the Negresco at Nice. "Evans," had said the Chief, "where can you get the most luxurious lunch in the world?" "I should say at the Negresco," said Evans. "Well, take the young men there and get it for them, and see it's the most expensive you can buy, and it hasn't to cost *them* a penny. Take the whole party there, so that they can see what a really expensive lunch is like. You must get them the most costly lunch that can be obtained at this luxury hotel. It should not cost less than £5 a head to be effective."

I believe it did cost about that, but, as none of us was really hungry, the effect was spoiled anyhow. Still, we all took our hats off to Evans as a connoisseur of dishes and of wines.

At Mont Agel an admiring crowd came to see Northcliffe hit off. He seemed rather pleased at the little stir his presence caused—especially among the caddies, who always got a lavish tip and a ride down the hill to Monte Carlo in his car if they wished. Pemberton and I followed Northcliffe and Murdoch round. The Chief lost a ball, and soon we were on top of him and being hard pressed behind. As we did not "go through," the couple behind us got rather blustering and said the whole bally course was being held up. "Well, *we* are not going through," said young Pemberton. "Why not?" "For very good reasons," he replied. The other fellows took the bull by the horns,

131. MONTE-CARLO Le Quartier de St-Roman et le Cap Martin — ND Phot.



A POSTCARD FROM NORTHCLIFFE TO THE AUTHOR

and, luckily for them—for they would have struck a whirlwind had they offended Northcliffe by pressing him—they, too, got into serious trouble and held up the course worse than ever.

Wednesday, March 30, 1921 : “ Let us all go to see the young people dancing at the Café de Paris this afternoon,” said the Chief. It was amusing to see the number of people there who obtruded themselves on Northcliffe. “ Don’t you remember meeting me at North Foreland ? ” said one perfect stranger, and another found some other excuse for butting in. “ They want to affirm their credit in the eyes of others,” said Northcliffe. As he sipped his Perrier water he discoursed thus on dancing. “ What a wonderful appeal this makes to young people. It is so harmless too. What is there objectionable in this harmless exercise ? What a wide international appeal. We ought to get a *Daily Mail* dance composed by the best possible man. Look into that when you get back, Tom. . . . Ah ! Look over there. The prettiest girl I have seen in the south of France, and she is not dancing. You young men ought to be ashamed of yourselves.” Murdoch and I rose together to remedy this serious situation. I got there first. “ That’ll mean a rise in salary for you,” said Murdoch. Alas, I could not endorse my Chief’s idea of beauty. But the girl was a wonderful dancer. I met her later in the evening—or early morning, to be exact—in one of the all-night dance establishments. She was a

professional dancer giving exhibitions. I did not tell Northcliffe. He was always annoyed to be disillusioned. . . . But to get back to the Café de Paris. The waiter came round to collect the money for tea. Northcliffe put his hands in his pockets and fumbled. He said, "Who has any money? Please pay for the tea. I never carry money. It is a nuisance." Murdoch paid, under a strict order to see that the amount went down as expenses. . . . Northcliffe took us back to the villa. On the way he told me to forget all about work and newspapers during this holiday, and straightway began to talk about newspaper insurance and his anxiety about it. "I cannot see how we are going to get back this immense sum of £25,000 we are spending on insurance." I wonder if this is propaganda to frighten off the other papers that are nibbling at similar schemes? He does not seem to relish the idea of an insurance battle.

At dinner to-night the Chief broke all his rules about going to bed early. He stayed with our happy party until 10.30 p.m. He, and, I suppose, all the rest of us, were in brilliant talking form. As Northcliffe rose to retire, he looked for a moment across the verandah towards the lights of Monte Carlo twinkling over the silver bay. He turned and said sadly: "I went to see a dying man this morning—poor Sir John Cowans, the man who really won the war by feeding the troops. . . . It is horrible. He is in great pain. He cannot be moved.

He has not long to live, and wishes to get home. I have telegraphed to the French Government to fix up a special sort of transport for the poor fellow. . . . ”

March 31, 1921 : As I walked with the Chief this morning he pointed out to me a villa towards Cap Martin. “ My brother’s place . . . Rothermere . . . I think he is here. I do not know. He is a far richer man than I. He is worth seven millions already.” He talked to me also, as he has done frequently of late, on news, what it is, and what we should do to keep the lead as the **BEST** newspaper in the world. He repeated his favourite saying that news is surprise—an unexpected happening ; that if a dog bites a man it is not news, but that if a man bites a dog, it *is* news. “ There are two main divisions of news,” he said ; “ one, actualities ; two, talking points. The first is news in its narrowest and best sense—reports of *happenings*, political resignations, strikes, crimes, deaths of famous people, wrecks and railway smashes, weather storms, sporting results, and so on. The second is getting the topics people are discussing and developing them, or stimulating a topic oneself, such as ‘ The Truth about the Night Clubs,’ ‘ Government Waste,’ ‘ Are our Motor Traffic Regulations Obsolete ? ’ ‘ Women’s Fashions Changes,’ ‘ The Riddle of Spiritualism.’ Or it may be a big political or social or economic topic. News of the first sort is easy to recognise and comparatively easy to obtain if you have an efficient organisation and a highly trained

and well-paid staff, as you have. But you must always be overhauling and improving your organisation, and keeping in closest touch with your staff and correspondents—personal touch—and not letting them drift into slackness or complacency. The fatal thing for a newspaper to do is to settle down and say, ‘Now we are all right.’ This first sort of news, of course, always goes in your ‘shop window’—that is, on your best page—just as the fruiterer puts his best apples on the top. Our best news is often buried, through sub-editorial slackness or want of judgment or vision. Almost every happening with a surprise in it is worth a page 5 top. [Page 5 is the main news page in the *Daily Mail*.] Watch for the element of surprise. [He now calls our main news page the “Surprise Page.”]

“News of the second sort, the ‘talking points,’ the ‘features,’ is news that does not fall into your basket like the other sort. It requires thought, initiative, looking ahead. It means a daily search by trained men of the world, directed by a news leader who has time to get about among men and women, time to think—a daily search for subjects in the public mind, or subjects that ought to be in the public mind. There are some who say it is this second sort of news, these ‘features’ and ‘talking points,’ that sells the newspapers. I do not agree. It is *hard news* that catches readers. Features hold them.

“It is true, of course, that the development of this

secondary news, especially with a view to attracting women readers, in the past twenty-five years, has had much to do with the expanding sales of the newspapers. Don't forget the women, Tom. Always have one 'woman's story' at the top of all the main news pages in your paper. Speaking of news generally, news of all sorts, how it has widened its appeal to the public in the past twenty-five years ! Newspapers used to be written only for men. Women and their interests were despised, and newspapers were made up of stodgy politics and dry leading articles by hacks—and sometimes a lengthy and lurid crime report. . . . I am afraid our paper was getting stodgy again after the war. We have got it on the right lines now, and have gone to about the limit of brightness. Be bright, but dignified.

"We must not let politics dominate the paper, but we must get the *news* in politics and give it all. But, please, no long-winded columns of mere words and hackneyed speeches of corrupt solemnity. Treat politics as you treat all other news—on its merits. It has no 'divine right' on newspaper space. . . . Make the paper a happy one, fresh and free from dullness, and with plenty of contrast in the news. Sometimes we have been so dull and respectable that you would think Britain was going to the dogs, which it ain't."

I mentioned here the criticisms one heard sometimes that the *Daily Mail* was a sensational paper.

"All rubbish," he went on. "The most sensational

POLICE ARE PECULIAR CATTLE

paper is the *Morning Post*. People who genuinely mistake brightness for sensationalism are to be pitied. But our detractors in this line are mostly our jealous rivals, whose sales we are capturing. Their methods of imitating us are certainly vulgar sensationalism, which merely shows what bad imitators they are. . . .”

This led us to talk about crime news, which must always be one of the nightmares of any news editor in London. So much depends on luck. Most other news services you can organise almost to a certainty. But the police are such peculiar cattle, from the heads down. You have got to get well-trained crime investigators with a big sense of responsibility, and the faculty of gaining the confidence of high and low in the force, and dispelling that suspicion of the Press which seems to come natural to policemen. Then, despite all your organisation, your rival down the street gets away with a first-class scoop. We have excellent tactful, highly paid men at the *Mail* on crime work. They are in a position to know better than any of their rivals what is going on. But they cannot know all, and it is no reflection on them to say that I go home every night with a feeling that we can never be absolutely secure in the matter of crime news. Every morning I open the rival newspapers and give a sigh of relief when I see they have got nothing we have not got. Northcliffe has the same nervousness, and is ever insistent on the tremendous value of getting exclusive crime news.

"It causes me much anxiety," he said, "more for *The Times* than the *Daily Mail*. How many men have you on crime?"

"Two."

"Get more if you need them. Develop rivalry among them. They must share their news with *The Times* and give *The Times* crime man all the help they can. We cannot afford to be beaten on crime news. We must have more and more exclusives, and every time we get an exclusive we must tell the public so in the story—and tell it them again the next day, and the next day after that, too. Crime exclusives are *noticed* by the public more than any other sort of news. They attract attention, which is the secret of newspaper success. They are the sort of dramatic news that the public always affects to criticise but is always in the greatest hurry to read. Watch the sales during a big murder mystery, especially if there is a woman in it. It is a revelation of how much the public is interested in realities, action, and mystery. It is only human. When you have a crime story, put your best leg forward to turn out the best possible paper in every other respect. Remember that your paper will be going into more hands than ever—casual buyers stirred by the big story. They may be captured as regular readers if you show that your paper is good in other things as well."

The Chief went on to say that the duty of those in editorial control of a newspaper was to have one big

feature every day . . . a big news feature, something different from what the other papers had. He was never pleased when our paper opened with the same story as the other London papers. On days when there have been obviously big news stories outstanding I have known him order us to lead the paper with some big feature other than this news in order that we would be "different." He was exceptionally keen on what he called "personal stories," especially about people in high places.

"I know Tom Marlowe does not like what he thinks is American journalism, but we can overdo respectability. If we kept out of the paper everything that everybody wanted keeping out, there would be little in but speeches and charity puffs. We musn't be too timid about offending a few people. As it is, the best news—much of it personal—never gets in the papers.

"Watch the pictures, get action news pictures, not studio 'still-lives.' We have too many pictures of the 'Man Looking at Turnip' type, or obscurities of the 'Which is Which?' type."

"The things people *talk* about are news—and what *do* they mostly talk about? Other people, their failures and successes, their joys and sorrows, their money and their food and their peccadilloes. Get more names in the paper—the more aristocratic the better, if there is a news story round them. You know the public is more interested in duchesses than servant-girls. One of the

rivals, I hear, tells its reporters to think of the paper as it were for the taxicab driver and the factory girl. They have merely become cheap and nasty. They have not yet realised that the taxicab driver and the factory girl would rather read news about Society folk and West End doings than sordid stories about low life. Ask the Amalgamated Press whether they do better in Lancashire with serial or periodical stories of factory life, or stories of high life. Everyone likes reading about people in better circumstances than his or her own. Keep that in mind. Write, and seek news with at least the £1,000 a year man in mind."

Saturday, April 2, 1921 : We are in Lyons this evening on our way back to London. We have left the Chief at Roquebrune. He insisted on our breaking our journey at Marseilles and Avignon and here, and getting about by car on visits to Arles, Les Baux' Tarascon, and other places. "I want you to know and understand something about France," he said to me, "so don't let them hurry you back to London. Don't worry about the coal dispute at home. It's big news, and you may feel it's your job to hurry back. But every head of a department ought to be able to leave his desk, even in times of big crisis. If he can't, he's not fit for his position, as it shows he has not got the right men working for him. . . . Take a week in Paris before you go back. Let's see how your deputy shapes. It's his chance. . . . And I want you to know and like France."

Before we left the alluring Mediterranean shores the Chief talked to me further on the subject of news. "We have not enough authoritative foreign or Empire news in the paper," he said. "We do not get sufficiently in touch with big men visiting London from our great overseas Dominions. The hotels are full of them. The Riviera is alive with wealthy Australians. But we hear little about them. Dig them out. They have wonderful news stories to tell, and are most interesting and refreshing personalities. Get Murdoch to keep you posted Our leading articles are often not up-to-date, not topical. They should keep abreast—even ahead—of the news. A *leading* article must not be a *following* article. There should be an effort to make our little literary articles on the leader page still more newsy and topical. Encourage new writers, but get hold of writers with big names—and advertise the fact. . . . I am glad we are explaining things more and being frank with our English. I never could understand the squeamishness which made us talk in our law reports of 'misconduct' when we meant 'adultery'; which caused us for years to talk about 'the hidden plague' instead of 'syphilis.' This false modesty was just a smoke-cloud that did more harm than good. Be clean, but be frank. Hiding the truth is the worst vice. A judge once wrote to ask me why we suppressed reports of abortion cases. He felt, as I do, that we should print reports of them to help stop race suicide. All newspapers, which should exist to do

good, should print these cases. I hope you are comparing our paper daily with the others. Have you a list of the staffs of your rivals—their news editors and the names and doings of their best men, especially in crime? Every news editor should keep such a list. . . . Who receives the books that come into the office for review? Often they contain the best news stories. I know it is adding greatly to your task, but you should see first all books that come in. Almost daily there is a book with a first-class news story. It's hopeless to expect an ordinary book reviewer to find them. The real way to review a book is to 'gut' it of its stories and put it on the news pages. . . ."

He asked if I were still happy in my work. I said I was, although it had never been my ambition to be a news editor. I had wanted to be a writing man. "Even now," I said, "there's not a man I send out on a good story but I go with him in spirit, and envy him his writing job."

"Yes," said the Chief, "that's why you are a successful news editor ; but your job now is to do more of the planning than the writing. There are plenty of men who can write, but few who can *report* news. The man who gets things done is the man who does them. A news editor must direct things rather than do them. His job is to look ahead for that news and those topics that do not occur to the routine writing man . . . original, out-of-the-way things that make the paper 'different.' Often

you will have to fight to get them in the paper. Others cannot see them. But persist and be a Bolshevik."

I talked to him of "stunts."

"Don't use that stupid word," he snapped. "A 'stunt,' " he said, "is merely what jealous newspapers call something their rival has done that they had not the brains to do themselves. It is mostly used by the pompous old ladies of the 'superior' Press. They are too silly to notice that they themselves are 'stunting' one thing or another all the time. The word is meaningless, because most news is a 'stunt' for one thing or another."

There was a passing reference to *The Miracle*, the Reinhardt spectacle at Olympia that Northcliffe turned from failure to success by "stunting" it as something that all London was missing. He said a journalist should not pursue exclusively for news those things that were public successes. Failures were news, and often news that provoked great public interest. "The Play That Will Not Go! Why?" "The Book that Will Not Sell! Why?" Those made excellent "talking-point" stories. They provoked the reader's curiosity. . . . How he understands the psychology of the people! Now I see the inwardness of one of his charity "stunts" I once heard of. Things were going badly, so he headed his propaganda "Stop Sending Money," and got all he wanted, and more. . . . Man is a curious animal; "Make him more curious still," seems to be his theory.

In the early days of the *Mirror*, so I once heard, he went to see the paper made up. One page looked dull. "Put a pretty girl picture in it," he said. They brought him a selection of pictures. The first he picked up had no name on the back. "Who is it?" he said. No one knew off-hand. "Put it in," he said, "under the caption 'WHO IS IT?'"

April 14, 1921 : Back in London, and settling down to work. I hear Evans reckons he is about £250 out on the "young millionaires'" trip to the Riviera. His fellow-directors are pulling his leg as to whether he will be bold enough to send the accounts through for the Chief to pay. I think he will. . . . Another and a more sedate party has gone to replace us at Roquebrune. A postcard from the Chief about them says his new guests are solemn as owls by comparison with their "fore-runners, or foredancers"—a reference to our young party's fondness for the dancing night-life of Monte Carlo.

May 4, 1921 : There was a time when the Chief would not allow his name in the paper except in exceptional circumstances. Since the war his ideas appear to have altered. His supreme achievement in personal "boosting" was surely on Sunday last, when he gave a huge staff luncheon at Olympia to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Daily Mail*. How many hundreds of people were present I do not know, but there were not enough for the Chief, and he was much annoyed on

noticing a few empty seats. There was a prayer for blessing for "Thy servant Alfred." Northcliffe, his aged mother on his arm, walked round the balcony to receive the plaudits of his workers. Soon after the great feast the Chief hurried back to the office to supervise personally the report of the event for the following day's paper. I was taking a rest from duty that day, and was unaware until later of what happened at the office when Northcliffe burst upon the little skeleton staff that had been left to carry on while the rest of us were junketing at Olympia. It appears that he strode into Carmelite House and demanded a shorthand writer. The man deputed for the job was so overcome with nerves that he could not take a single note. Northcliffe was furious, and implied that the man had been letting himself go too freely at the luncheon, which was not true, as the reporter in question had not been there. Two other reporters stepped into the breach and took down the Chief's dictation. In his complaint to me about the affair the Chief said the man who had broken down should not remain on the staff any longer. I wrote saying I thought this was unjust, that the reporter in question was not the man for that particular job, and a man of his long and good service should not be treated badly. To-day I received a message that my letter was beside the point. It was not, argued the Chief, that X should not have been sent to *him*. He should not be sent to anybody. He said my letter reminded him of the formal

reply of the telephone people when he found them being rude—"Very sorry, Chief, we did not know it was you." He added that X had done very good work for us and should receive proper treatment.

Later he telephoned, and the matter has been fixed up satisfactorily. This little sidelight has shown, however, that, kindly as he may be in his personal dealings, he will on no account allow sentiment to obtrude into his business. I sometimes wonder if in his relentless hunt for efficiency and ability he pays much regard to character. Give him an able man who can get on with others, and that seems enough. Nor does he allow family sentiment or influence to interfere with this great news business of his. The other day there was a rather distinguished party at his brother Cecil's up-river place. Cecil is Assistant Secretary at the Foreign Office, and when we got news of a robbery by an intruder under the noses of the guests at the party we sent a man down to get the story. Cecil asked that nothing be said about the affair, and said he would ring up Northcliffe. In due course the Chief came through to me on the telephone. "I hear there has been a robbery at my brother's house. Tell me what you know about it." When I had done so, he said, "You must publish it all. I hear they are trying to hush it up. It is perfectly ridiculous. Telephone to my brother in my name. Tell him there can be no hushing up. . . . Why, my mother's butler was there and knows all about it. Ask him, too."

May 9, 1921 : The insurance fight with other newspapers about which Northcliffe has been worrying for some time is developing. The *Daily Express* is our chief rival, and is making the running in the matter of benefits to readers. Fagence, one of our young reporters, sent me a suggestion that the only way to knock out the *Express* was to go double on every offer they made. I passed the suggestion to the Chief, who himself is handling all the propaganda, and later he told me that he agreed with Fagence's suggestion, but had been overruled by other directors, to whom, in a matter of such financial magnitude, he must defer. . . .

The other day the Chief rang up and said, " There is an extraordinary new interest developing in the push-bicycle. People have realised that you cannot see the country in this beautiful England from trains or motor-cars. They move too quickly. How I envy those young people who get about on push-bicycles where neither trains nor cars may go. They know the real meaning of the open road. I was a push-cyclist myself once. I used to ride one of those high ' ordinaries ' or ' penny-farthings.' Let us have a new series of articles on ' The New Way of Seeing England.' Send a man out on this great new adventure. Who is the man ? I know. Walter Gallichan. Provide him with the best bicycle money can buy, and turn him loose. Keep him away from the railways. Let him pedal his way to Scotland and tell the daily adventures of the road, describe the

country inns, and the food and prices. He should take a tent, and spend a night or two in the open if possible. He must fully describe costs and equipment, so that his articles will be a guide to other adventurers." So Gallichan has started, and almost simultaneously the Chief has also started for Scotland—but not by push-cycle—to look into industrial matters. He has gone to Manchester first, and has taken with him Alex M. Thompson, our Labour correspondent. "I am going to see for myself," he said, "to investigate on the spot this dreadful coal strike." Before he left, the Chief tried to get a talk with Frank Hodges, the miners' secretary. Hodges said to Thompson, who conveyed the invitation to see Northcliffe, "Ah, that wants thinking about. I will telephone later." But he did not telephone.

May 14, 1921 : The great Cunarder *Aquitania* sailed for New York to-day, her stewards, owing to a strike of the regular men, mostly amateur volunteers. There is sure to be interesting and original copy in the voyage, and wireless has made the reporting of daily events aboard an easy matter. So, after a great scramble, we got our special correspondent, J. M. N. Jefferies, away with the ship. Jefferies was in Essen yesterday morning, but he was *the* man for this novel job. We were lucky to get him in London by 5 o'clock last night. He left again for Southampton to join the *Aquitania* at 9.15 with all the cheerfulness that makes him so likeable. I would have liked the support of higher authority for

this enterprise, but yesterday was one of those days when all the "higher-ups" (as the Chief calls them), from himself downward, were not available. So I acted "off my own bat." I heard one or two murmurings in the corridors of Carmelite House about the doubtful wisdom of the whole costly business, so when the Chief rang through this morning I was rather anxious. "I'm sorry I've spent a lot of your good money to-day, Chief," I said. "What have you done?" I told him. "Excellent idea," he said. "We could not afford to be without a man in that ship in such novel circumstances. What are you worrying about?" "Well, I wasn't able to consult anyone on the matter, and I hadn't time to wait, so I pushed Jefferies off, and I rather wondered whether you would think the thing was worth the expense." "My dear boy," he said, "if your decision had been wrong, *which it ain't*, I should have supported you. Better a wrong decision any time than no decision at all. And remember this in your newspaper career—you have got to spend money to make it." That reminds me of an incident during my days as Night News Editor, when I paid £5 to a man for a scoop after a fearful amount of haggling which reduced his demand from £10. It was a first-class story, and next day Caird, who had no doubt had a lesson similar to mine from Northcliffe earlier in his career, said: "What did you pay the man who brought in that story?" When I told him, he said, "It's worth at

least £15. Get the fellow in and tell him, and give him another tenner. If you don't, when he sees what a stir the story has created to-day, with all the other papers chasing it, he will go all round Fleet Street talking about out niggardliness, and next time he gets a winner he'll take it elsewhere."

Sunday, May 15, 1921 : Northcliffe, although insisting on perfect system in his organisations, impresses me as a most unsystematic man himself, especially with his correspondence. He will not set apart half an hour a day to deal with it. His secretaries have to push it through whenever they can, in train, motor-car, or at odd moments indoors. He just looks at the most important letters and drops them on the floor. "It can wait," he says. His bedroom is littered with the most important documents and correspondence—letters under the bed, in corridors, everywhere. He gets, on an average, about two hundred letters a day, and his secretaries work on a system of reducing them to twenty. When he is abroad the number is cut down to twelve. The Chief has an impish way of rapping on the knuckles people who, he thinks, worry him needlessly about details. A certain departmental head submitted papers to him for a decision. Northcliffe wrote telling the man that he was paid his thousands a year to make decisions and was not to worry his Chief about those trivial matters. If they were beyond him, he was to consult the boy in charge of the messenger-room. The

point of the story, which reveals Northcliffe as a mischievous joker, is that he also wrote a letter to the chief messenger boy asking him to oblige the departmental head concerned in settling a little matter that should not be beyond an office-boy. The further point of the story is that he put the letters in the wrong envelopes. . . . Probably a note recently issued by H. G. Price, the terribly efficient and tactful secretary, has something to do with all this. He asks us all not to decide lightly to "refer it to the Chief," and to remember that there are five hundred other departments all probably wishing to worry him, and that "very highly paid heads of departments" should be able to decide details for themselves.

May 1921 (undated) : The Chief rang me up on Wednesday about Melba's *au revoir* concert at the Albert Hall. "Melba is anxious about it," he said, "especially in view of the coal strike. She fears it will not be a success. I have promised that I will fill the Albert Hall for her, and we alone can do it. See to it. I leave it all to you. Use the *Daily Mail*, the *Evening News*, and the *Weekly Dispatch*." So we got the whole "circus" going, with George Curnock beating the drum as only he can beat it. We reduced Melba to exhaustion by the interviews we compelled her to yield daily. We interviewed her doctor on the wonder of her vocal chords. We got all London talking Melba, and made it quite apparent to Society that anyone who missed the Melba

farewell was just a rank outsider. "Publish the names of all big people who are going, and then you'll hear of dozens more who can't afford not to be in the crush," ordered Northcliffe. "These people love to see their names in print. . . . The crowd will follow." In the end we had every bookable seat booked, and there was a queue outside the hall on the morning of the concert. Hundreds were turned away. . . .

Falk tells me the Chief rang him up last Saturday night as he was making up the *Weekly Dispatch* and said :

"Do you know Sam Isaacs' place in Covent Garden ? "

"Yes, Chief."

"Well, put on your hat and coat and go and ask him, with Lord Northcliffe's compliments, where he puts his best apples."

Falk thought it was a funny request, but he went. On his return the Chief rang up :

"Well, did you ask Mr. Isaacs where he puts his best apples ? What was his reply ? "

Falk : "He said he put his best apples in the shop window."

The Chief : "That's it. Put your best news there to-night, my boy—in *your* shop window, your front page."

CHAPTER XI

THE WORLD TOUR

Wednesday, June 1, 1921 : I have suspected for some time that the Chief has a leaning towards the superstitious. To-day I picked up a copy of the *Occult Review* containing his horoscope. When I spoke to him about it, he appeared to be surprised, but I rather fancy he had inspired this attempt to read the starry indication of his fate and fortune on the eve of the start of his world tour.

I : I have been reading your fortune to-day, Chief.

Chief : My fortune ? Whatever do you mean ?

I : They have your horoscope in the current issue of the *Occult Review*, and——

Chief : How can they have my horoscope ? They don't know the time of day I was born.

I : Well, they say you were born at four in the afternoon.

Chief : They are about right, then. I believe I was born in the afternoon. My father, I was told, was sitting outside our house at Chapelizod—in Ireland, you know. He was in the garden. It was in the days when men wore smoking-caps, and my mother told me that as soon as he heard I was a boy he threw his

smoking-cap in the air. I must see this horoscope. I am very superstitious.

I : Are you really ?

Chief : Yes. I don't believe people who pretend they have no superstitions. They are like people who say they have never had a day's illness in their lives. You know there are many people like that.

I : The horoscope says you will always have to take care of your health.

Chief : I have been ill very often. Don't believe the man who says he has never had a day's illness in his life. . . . How are you to-day, Tom ?

I : Very fit, thanks.

Chief : *Don't boast.* . . . Being ill does not worry me at all. I have been ill very often and for such long periods that it does not worry me. I have spent about three years in bed with illness—double pneumonia once, the year King Edward died ; then operation two years ago. No, ignore the man who talks about never having been ill. Sir John Cowans—poor fellow, you know how he died practically in my arms at Mentone—used to say he had never had a day's illness. Beware of people who say that. Being ill is such a novelty to them that it kills them. . . . What is the name of this paper with my horoscope ? Get me five dozen copies.

I : Sixty copies ?

Chief : Yes, sixty. I want to send them away.

The horoscope compares Northcliffe with Napoleon,

and points out as a "curious coincidence" that "the centenary of Napoleon's death and the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the *Daily Mail* occurred on consecutive days." It says that both Napoleon and Northcliffe were born under the same sign of the zodiac, that "both began life with little prospect of the success that was in store for them, and both were members of large families and were the means of raising their brothers to positions of power and influence." Apart from this, the two N's had little in common. There is a lot of stuff of this sort which doesn't seem to lead one anywhere. The stars, however, are said to indicate that the Chief's enemies are more likely to play into his hands than to endanger his position; the promise of financial success is very strongly emphasised; there are signs of remarkable business aptitude—all of which surely needed no horoscope to reveal. It is pointed out that the "mid-heaven" is not sufficiently strong for the position of Prime Minister. The good influences in the horoscope do not come powerfully into operation till early middle life, and "the affliction of both the Sun and Moon by the planet Saturn denotes defects in the constitution, and care will always have to be taken of the health. In fact, if it had not been for the trine of the Sun to the ascendant and the natural virility of the rising sign it is doubtful if Lord Northcliffe would have lived to his present age. Death, when it comes, may come somewhat

suddenly." London, the United States, Spain, and France are indicated as propitious countries. Close friendships will be few.

June 2, 1921 : A certain paragraph about a company appeared in the *Mail* the other day which the Chief regards as a "financial puff," and it has annoyed him greatly. He says people think he is responsible, when really he knows nothing of finance, and it is his rule to have nothing to do with finance or financiers. "I know no financiers," he often says, "and don't want to." He is also rather cross about certain pictures and references in the paper to women in breeches. Many people, he says, believe that masculine tendencies in women are interfering with the birth-rate, and publicity such as we give to such matters is a terrific responsibility in view of the power of suggestion.

Tuesday, June 7, 1921 : The miners' choir from Ystrad, which is visiting London to gather funds for the miners' wives and children in distress through the coal strike, sang outside the office this morning as the Chief was talking to me from Carlton Gardens on the telephone. He heard faintly the singing, and asked what it was. When I explained, he said, "Are you sending them out any money? Send them £5 from the *Daily Mail*. Let it be given them publicly, to let the crowd see how generous we are. I will wait while you see to it. Let me know what happens." As I went along the corridor I met Glover, the commissionaire. "Have you seen any of

those collecting miners ? ” he asked. “ I have been told to stop them from going collecting through the office.” I said, “ Stop the chief collector and send him to the cashier to collect £5 from the *Daily Mail*.” “ But how do I stand about my orders ? ” asked Glover. “ I’ll fix that,” I said. And a few moments later I heard the spokesman announcing, to the crowd below, the great generosity of the *Daily Mail*, amid loud cheers.

Wednesday, June 8 : My good friend William Pollock, our dramatic critic, is the latest butt for the Chief’s caprice. Some time ago Pollock wrote an article for our literary page. It appeared under the signature “ Pollock-Pollock,” although the writer had signed it, as usual, “ William Pollock.” Everybody, including Pollock, thought it was a printer’s error, but the fact trickled out that Northcliffe, who himself chooses the Page 4 articles, had altered the name in the proof and had marked it “ Not to be altered.” Pollock was not inclined to allow such liberties with his name, and the next time a signed article of his appeared it carried the correct name. The Chief, I think, had been absent. To-day he rang me up and said, “ Who is our dramatic critic ? ” I replied, “ William Pollock.”

The Chief : He has no right to a name like that. There are too many Pollocks in the office. He ought to sign his articles with initials. The office is full of Pollocks. It is as bad as the McKenzies. It is unjust to my secretaries. They get all mixed up. . . .

PREPARATIONS FOR WORLD TOUR

But Pollock won't have it. If there is anything in having an unusual name, I think he has missed a chance.

The reference to "the McKenzies" concerns our Night News Editor, C. R. McKenzie, who held the desk while I was away the other day. "Your deputy has done very well, Tom," the Chief said when I returned, "but why is he called McKenzie? What other names has he?" "Charles Robert," I said. "Then in future he will be CROBERT McKenzie," said the Chief. "Tell him so. It is a great gift to him. It will look fine at the top of an article. Besides, one must distinguish between all the members of this McKenzie dynasty."

July 14, 1921 : To-day the Chief telephoned me about the world tour on which he is starting in a few days and said he was sending me a letter which would help me.

(In this letter, which came the same day, the Chief said, "I want you young men to feel that, although I am far away, you will be having my fullest support." He said he had written to the "higher-ups" telling them to "leave you alone as much as possible," although "Mr. Marlowe, as Editor, has the right to stop anything, but I am sure he will give you a free hand in your constructive and executive work." He added that Sir George Sutton held his, Northcliffe's, Power of Attorney.)

July 1921 (undated) : The Chief has started on his world tour. The Far East and Australia are his main objectives. "I want," he said, "to solve the Riddle of

the Pacific and White Australia. I want to know and understand better this great Empire and the world at large. When I return, if you young men have shown that you can carry on the vast responsibilities of my organisations, I shall go another tour, to South Africa and South America. I am growing older, and must see all I can quickly. I do not travel enough. You do not travel enough. I have got plans in mind for the future of my business. My absence will be a test of them for my guidance. I hope you young men will do well." For some time past he has been harping on the lack of Empire knowledge among London journalists. A week or two ago he asked me : " Who is going to report the Imperial Conference for you ? " He was not satisfied with the name I mentioned. " Oh, no," he said, " he's a first-rate man on most things, but he has never been to any of the overseas Dominions. The reports of this important conference must be by a man who has spent some time overseas and knows the chief Dominions, their people and their outlook. I think I have the right man. I will send him to you to be tried out. This Imperial Conference must be reported by a man who knows. You haven't been to the Dominions, have you ? "

I : Oh, yes, I . . .

Chief : Yes, Hong Kong—and Canada. But you were only a few days in Canada, and Canada, my dear boy, is a very big place. There are many Canadas. . . . Do you know Australia ?

I : No.

Chief : I am sorry I cannot take you there with me. We must encourage our young men at Carmelite House to travel more. You must go to Australia one day. You ought to have at least six months there. Do you know, I don't suppose there is a single London editor who has been there, and yet our papers pontificate on the Commonwealth's problems as if they knew all about them. Do you realise that something is going to happen to this Empire one way or another, very probably in your lifetime, and the man who *knows* is going to be the man in demand ? . . . But you can't go just yet, my boy.

I : Do you know, Chief, that when, some years ago, I came back from my extensive Far Eastern travels, I was refused a job on every paper in London, including your own, because I was " out of touch " ?

Chief : Who was the man you saw at the *Daily Mail* ?

I : I cannot remember now.

Chief : I am sure he is not there now. That was the silly, old-fashioned idea of Fleet Street of the cloisters age, when the self-complacent and parochial newspapers were filled with police court cases and stupid leading articles by hacks who said nothing. The printer was the real boss in those days. Thank goodness, we have helped to shake things up. . . . I suppose some surviving relic of those bad old days will be saying I am " out of touch " when I return. . . . It is Fleet Street

itself that is even yet out of touch. You don't find news in Fleet Street. You find it in the great world. Our men not only do not travel abroad enough, they do not get about town enough. Never let a reporter rusticate in the office. If he is idle, turn him out into the world of London, where news is always waiting for the alert journalist, in tram, 'bus, street, or club. I see half a dozen stories every time I go out. . . . *You* must get about more. I will add £250 a year to your salary to enable you to do so." A letter from him the same evening, signed "Your attached Chief," confirmed his promise.

Northcliffe had a great send-off in the boat train at Waterloo. The time of his departure had been previously stated in his newspapers. "What is all the crowd here for?" were almost his last naïve words of farewell to me.

September 1921 (undated) : Valentine Williams, Fisher, and I had a little farewell dinner with Sir Ernest Shackleton at the Piccadilly. Shackleton is sailing for the Antarctic in the *Quest* in a day or two. We have fixed up the rights for Shackleton's story. Northcliffe, who knew of this arrangement before he went abroad, showed no enthusiasm in the matter. Probably this is because he saw nothing spectacular, such as a Polar dash, in the famous explorer's latest expedition, but it is also due to a certain coolness he developed towards Shackleton some time ago following the explorer's attempt to get him interested in a new company of some

sort. Northcliffe listened to Shackleton for a few minutes and then stopped him thus : " This is an insult to my intelligence. If I wanted to go into this affair I should go to an expert in finance. I know nothing about it. I should employ such an expert and not an amateur. Someone is using you, Shackleton. I advise you to stick to things you understand."

November 5, 1921 : Northcliffe is now in Japan. With the exception of the stir created by his alleged references to the King and Ireland in the United States—which the Chief has denied—his tour has gone placidly, and, apart from his articles and an occasional postcard, one has heard little from him. . . . Before he left England the Chief, with that attachment he has for old friends, instructed me to find congenial work on the staff for Charles Benham, the barrister who for many years has read our proofs at night to help us avoid libel actions, and has now given up that rather trying work. Benham, who is good at descriptive work and especially at writing up life-stories of people, is a sort of philosopher and friend to the youngsters in the office. " I have been young in this office," he said the other day, " and am now old, and I give you this tip, ' Assert yourself while you are young there,' otherwise there is nowt in it." Benham used to sit in a small room outside the Night Editor's office. He always used red ink on his proofs—the danger sign. He kept most careful note of his encounters with editorial men on the

advisability of publishing this or that. The most vital passages were in red ink also. Northcliffe chafed often at what he called the "red flannel petticoat" influence of the legal experts who caused us to "tone down" good stories. Although he had appointed them, he would say, "If you listen to them you will get nothing interesting in the paper. Don't let them bully you into dullness by their quibbles. The final responsibility is the Editor's. They are but advisers."

* * *

February 22, 1922 : The Chief is back on European soil. There is an air of the "condemned cell" about the office. When will the blow fall, and where? When will the executioner appear? He arrived at Marseilles last Saturday in the P. and O. liner *Egypt*, which he had joined at Port Said. He left her at Marseilles to get acclimatised, and to accumulate his powder and shot for the attack on Carmelite House which is foreshadowed by the avalanche of petulant telegrams from the Grand Hotel Eden at Cap d'Ail, where he is staying. He wires that immediate steps ought to be taken to stop waste in Palestine, where he has been staying with the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel. Apparently, too, the *Evening News* people are going to get a terrific welting very soon. There was another personal telegram to me which gave me a deal of embarrassment. It demanded to know the meaning of the word "ectoplasm" in one of our leading articles. "Nobody

in this hotel," he said, "understands it." He asked me to telegraph to him the name of the writer. Now our leader-writer had written the article in question, but the Editor had inserted the word "ectoplasm" as a metaphor, as the word was loud in the public ear at the time in connection with Sir A. Conan Doyle's spiritualistic revelations. I wondered for a while what to do. I had to send some reply to the Chief. Finally I decided to put the whole case to the Editor himself. So I went down to Marlowe's room and said: "I have had a telegram from the Chief. It is most distasteful to me to have to show it you, and I am sure you will know how I feel about it, but there it is, and there is the reply I propose sending." Marlowe looked at it, went white and then red, lit a cigarette, and tossed telegram and reply—the latter he did not read—back to me.

"Well?" he asked.

"What am I to say?" I said.

"You can say what the hell you like," said Marlowe. "You are asked a question. It's your job to send an answer. I have nothing to do with it, and I don't give a damn what you say." Gee, but what a great chap Marlowe is! His demeanour was a lesson to a younger man like myself in how to face an awkward situation. . . . Postcards are arriving from the south of France in great numbers for members of the staff. I have one containing a picture of one huge bear and two little ones. It is captioned "The Return of the Chief." He is

the Big Bear, and there are jests at the expense of myself and Pulvermacher, the Night Editor, who are represented by the two little bears. McLeod, the Literary Editor, has one bearing this screed : " Suggested head for Page 4 articles : ' When the Cat is Away.' " Another warns the recipient that " the earthquake is at hand." Another asks, " Where is the Old Man ? " and on the other side of the card is the Dead Sea and some reference to the Old Man of the Sea, " but very much alive." At *The Times* office they are getting a postcard avalanche too. " One can almost hear the knees of our directors knocking," said a junior to me to-day.

Sunday, February 26, 1922 : The Chief is supposed to have returned to London to-day. There is no news of him at the office. Everybody on tenterhooks.

Monday, February 27, 1922 : The " great silence " of the Chief continues.

Tuesday, February 28, 1922 : Princess Mary married. No word from the Chief, but I see he was in the Abbey for the wedding ceremony. Lady Diana Cooper wrote a special description for us. When I went to her Gower Street house to ask her to do it she had some qualms as to whether Buckingham Palace would approve. I told her this was *the* big day in the Princess's life, that women all over the Empire were looking to London, and that surely there could be no objection. After two refusals, she agreed. . . . Everybody much pleased with her distinctive article.

Wednesday, March 1, 1922 : Fell ill with cold on chest. Chief 'phoned office that to-day's wedding number was perfect.

Sunday, March 5, 1922 : I went back to duty to-day. In my absence the past few days the Chief has let loose a veritable bombardment. He is at Broadstairs. He came through to me on the 'phone after lunch.

"How are you, Tom?"—his voice seemed stronger than before. "I hear you have been ill. Running away from me, eh?"

"I am really very glad you are back," I said.

"Well," he went on, "that's only my fun. I am very grateful to you, and all you young men, for your wonderful work for me while I have been absent. You must come away to Pau with me for a holiday among the Pyrenees. Pronounce it *PO*. Near Biarritz. Not to be confused with the Riviera. Are you sure you are quite better? You have earned a holiday. . . . Have you been following the news of this general strike in Hong Kong? You know the place, don't you? Cable our correspondent at Hong Kong to cable daily a simple explanation of the position. It must be at urgent rates. That's nine shillings a word. See that *The Times* gets our cables too. I want to have a long talk with you at Pau about our representation abroad. The Editor of *The Times* [Wickham Steed], Falk [Editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*], and Sir George Sutton will be in the Pau party. . . . Whatever have you been doing about

insurance during my absence ? Do you see how we have been drawn into this awful squabble with our competitors ? These smaller rivals of ours are all getting the benefit of it. Do you know they are advertising in the villages all over the country ? Never get involved in a fight with anybody smaller than yourself. I should have thought that that was obvious to anyone who understood publicity. Please make no reference at all to the insurance schemes of other newspapers. We are getting badly beaten through under-estimating our rivals and not looking beyond our noses. I'll telegraph for you from Pau when to come. . . . Don't waste time thanking me, my boy. You have earned a holiday. Pau will do you good—quieter than Monte. No dancing-parties. Some ignorant people think it is somewhere on the Riviera. It is quite different. The air is quite different. I have even heard of ignorant doctors, who don't know the difference between the Pyrenees air and the Riviera air, sending patients to the wrong place. They lump it all together as the ' Riviera ' or the ' South of France.' They ought to know better."

Tuesday, March 7 : The Chief has retreated to his quiet bungalow at Crowborough, cut off from the world. Very few people are allowed to visit him there. Yesterday he telephoned me from his hermitage to send a message to his mother. I am told that daily during his world tour he communicated with her either by cable or wireless. They are simple messages

of affection, showing the wonderful relationship between this remarkable man and his remarkable mother. He says he is going away again to-morrow. He finds England too cold after Australia and the Near East. "I am going to the Pyrenees. You will join me there shortly." I have been talking with John Prioleau, whom the Chief took round the world with him, because I suppose he likes good-looking men of the world around him, and Prioleau is all that, besides being a writer (on motoring mostly) of a very graceful and informative style. "What's your big impression of the tour, John?" I asked, and he replied, "The miracle that the Chief and I didn't get fed up with each other. I went in trepidation—to be all that time with the Chief, unable to escape him and him unable to escape me. . . . And yet, not a single cross word—but we came very near it once or twice." Prioleau is a special favourite of the Chief, who sent him last year across Europe to Morocco and Algeria in a two-seater car. The idea was to demonstrate the efficiency of the modern light car for all sorts of touring—the start of a new era in popular motoring. When the articles from Prioleau began to appear, people wrote in large numbers for the name of his car. Northcliffe said, "Not yet." In the articles the car was called "Imshi." In the final article it was revealed as a Morris-Oxford. One day we shall probably see a statue of John at the Morris works. Everybody talked about his wonderful pioneer tour.

CHAPTER XII

THE PYRENEES HOLIDAY :
“WATCH BEAVERBROOK”

Thursday, March 9, 1922 : The Chief left for Pau to-day. He says that during his world tour he has been living in high temperatures, and English rooms of 60 degrees are impossible. He can't stand the cold climate. To-day's sighs of relief in the corridors of Carmelite House at his departure were premature. At Dover he was held up by a storm. He was very impatient about it. He hated wasting time, so he turned the delay to account by administering a farewell long-distance telephonic "strafe" to Carmelite House. He got his travelling secretaries at work on this shake-up, as he called it. From the telephone office on the station—whence they hurried to and fro with "orders"—they fired his machine-gun messages at this and that surprised departmental head or gave instructions how to deal with news and features in his absence. All Carmelite House was agog. Some feared he would return at once without crossing the Channel. There were fervent hopes for abatement of the Dover storm. There were exhortations for me about the European economic conference at Genoa, and a hope that we were watching the

American papers for their opinion on world affairs. The next minute would come a complaint that Teddy Tail, the children's feature, required fresh animals, such as monkeys and elephants. . . . However, the storm abated, and off he went, and we breathed again.

Tuesday, March 14, 1922 : The Chief has telegraphed me to pack up and join him for a holiday at Pau. Incidentally, he added a few remarks about the interesting political situation, advised me to "Watch the Fat Man from Cannes" (meaning Lord Derby), and to find out what Lloyd George was doing at Criccieth. "I believe," he said, "he has sent for the Fat Man to try and bolster up the show." Montague Smith hurried to Criccieth, but it was a fruitless journey.

Friday, March 17, 1922 : At Pau. Delightful spot. I came across France in the Sud-Express with J. C. Akerman of *The Times*, also in the Pyrenees party. We are with the Chief at the Gassion Hotel. He says he likes it because it has no jazz band and no dancing and he wants a quiet holiday this time. "You will probably be asleep this afternoon in the wonderful air here," he said to me this morning as we stood looking across the roaring Gave de Pau towards the majestic snow-capped Pyrenees beyond the nearer vine-clad hills. "This is the place to send you to sleep, to quieten your nerves. It is different, quite different from Monte Carlo. You don't feel like rushing about to dances and

casinos. It's good air for throaty people like myself, too. I have come here to acclimatise myself after those long months in the tropics. You are here on holiday. Don't bother about the papers. A man who can't get out of his rut on holiday is no use to me. Enjoy yourself. Look at the Pyrenees there. Do you know, I have never seen those wonderful mountains the same colour. I have seen them all colours. They will have changed again in another hour. . . .” At luncheon in the Chief's private room I had the chance to note whether his travels had altered him. This is the first time I have seen him face to face since his return. He looks a little thinner than when I last saw him last July. On the whole, he looks rather better, though there is a tiredness about his speech and actions. He is a very jolly host, full of jest and story. He is dieting, and drinking very little. He eschews tea, and says he drinks half a bottle of Vittel at intervals during the day. At luncheon he took a little white wine, but refused coffee. At dinner he took white wine, champagne, and a *fine*. “I have got down to 12 stone 10,” he said, “and I want to get down to 12 stone.” He eats heartily and well, and is very keen on the delicious fresh trout we get here. . . . He went to bed as usual at 9.15 to-night, very quietly, it seemed to me.

Saturday, March 18, 1922 : The Chief is not going to let this place send us to sleep, anyhow. This morning he called Akerman and myself quite early and said :

"Take the car and see the country. Go to Lourdes, and then to Biarritz and San Sebastian. You can do it in the day if you get off early. But be careful to be back and dressed for dinner at 7.15. I have some other people coming." We went to consult with the chauffeur Pine. "I should cut out Lourdes," he said. "You can go there another day. Why, it's 240 miles to San Sebastian and back, and Lourdes is in the other direction." So we decided to risk the Chief's displeasure by forgetting his "orders" about Lourdes, and off we sped via Orthez and Bayonne, had lunch at Biarritz, early tea at San Sebastian, and arrived back at Pau on time after doing a steady fifty along the magnificent French military roads. On our return we found Sir George Sutton had arrived from Monte Carlo. The Chief asked us about our trip. Had we noticed the fair Spaniards near the frontier? They were the descendants of our prisoners in the Peninsular Wars. And had we noticed the mysterious Basque people, about whose ancestry ethnologists were still guessing? . . . At dinner to-night he asked if any of us had read *If Winter Comes*, and added, "I cannot understand why people are reading it. It sends me to sleep. I am bored to death with the silly creature with the bicycle." "Why do you read it then, Chief?" I asked. "Because," he replied, "it is important for me to know why 500,000 people have bought or read that book. My business is to know what the public wants to

read. . . . I cannot understand it. . . .” It is the duty of one of the Chief’s two travelling secretaries to “read him to sleep” every night. At Pau here, Humphrey Davy and Duncan take the job in turns. The Chief calls them “Dilly and Dally.” Davy is allowed a bottle of port a night when he is reading to the Chief. Duncan has not grown quite bold enough for that, and takes water. It was Davy’s turn to-night. Precisely at 9.15 he was ready with his bottle of port and *If Winter Comes*. “Dear me, Davy,” said Northcliffe, “have I to listen to more of that horrible book again?” Then he turned to me. “You shall have something more interesting to read, Tom, anyhow. Davy, get my private diary of the world tour.” He handed me a bulky typewritten MS. headed, “MY JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD. FOR MY PRIVATE CIRCLE ONLY. CIRCULAR LETTER NUMBER ONE.” I appear to be in for an interesting evening.

Sunday, March 19, 1922 : This morning, thanking the Chief for lending me his diary, I said I had read with special interest his references to the United States, and the incident when he was alleged to have quoted the King there in connection with the distressing situation in Ireland. “Of course, that was entirely false,” he said, “but did you read about my interview with the President. You know Lord Curzon impudently tried to get me boycotted in Washington, and made Sir Auckland Geddes cancel an embassy banquet ; but the

MESSAGE FROM THE KING

President gave me the longest interview ever given to a private person." . . . In this matter the Chief was certainly an innocent victim of one of those "misunderstandings" when statements are attributed to the wrong person. When the alleged interview bearing Northcliffe's signature reached us, Sir Campbell Stuart, the first available director to whom the telegram could be submitted, gave instructions that it should not be published, but it was too late to prevent its appearance in the Irish edition, which had gone to press earlier. Copies of this Irish edition reached Mr. Lloyd George, who saw the King and then moved the adjournment of the House of Commons to read a message from His Majesty. On this Campbell Stuart at once telegraphed to Northcliffe that he had countermanded the interview (he had a Power of Attorney). He never got a reply from Northcliffe. The only word from Northcliffe was to Reuter, giving a copy of the famous telegram to Lord Stamfordham offering his "humble duty" to His Majesty and adding only, "I gave no such interview." I remember the fuss in Carmelite House. It was a very uncomfortable day. There were meetings of directors, and the cables across the Atlantic were busy. The office Jeremiahs were going about the corridors saying the Chief seemed to have put his foot in it well and truly this time. Sir Andrew Caird took a hand, and with such shrewdness, caution, and diplomacy, that he gave the impression by the end of

the day that the tables had been turned on Lloyd George for an attack that was scarcely justified.

We motored to Lourdes to-day. At dinner, on our return, the Chief said: "It is the greatest piece of showmanship in the world. The new generation of newspaper readers knows nothing of this wonderful place and the extraordinary pilgrimages of the crippled and the sick there. Send one of our new, young reporters to describe the next big pilgrimage. Tell my "Scotch ferret" (a new name for the Dally of his two secretaries) to remind you when you get back to London. You must not bother making notes about work while you are on holiday."

The Chief to-night also talked about the value of knowing what the people were really saying about his papers. "I have spies everywhere watching my papers," he said. "They tell me what they hear and what they think, not what they think I would like to hear. I have them in the most unexpected places—in the office itself, in railway trains, trams, and tubes. Some of them are women. The chief spotter is Nemo." (He, I believe, is an ex-officer who convalesced in Lady Northcliffe's war hospital.) "They watch people everywhere," went on the Chief, "and keep eyes and ears open. They know. They make daily reports. I compare all their reports." This makes one feel a little bit uncomfortable. . . .

Monday, March 20, 1922 : Playing golf round the lovely

Pau course to-day, I asked the Chief about his world tour and said : “ Where, if you had to leave England, would you settle ? ” He did not hesitate : “ Paris first, and, if that were not possible, well, New Zealand. That is a place I want to see again. I shall never see China again. You may. I am getting older. You will certainly hear more about China—that wonderful Far East. Do you know, it is the part of the world that is changing most . . . and changing quickly. As for Australia—a place you must see, Tom—I wonder if she will get in time the population she needs. . . . Do you know what a ‘ Pommie ’ is ? They would call *you* a ‘ Pommie ’ if you went there. I met shiploads of the returning ‘ Pommies.’ There’s something wrong about the Australian attitude to the emigrant, and I believe the Labour people there are to blame. . . . I am sending Sir William Beach Thomas on an Empire tour to study emigration. He will be here probably to-morrow. I want you to talk to him.” I asked the Chief what was most in his mind about his world tour. “ The need for our journalists to travel more,” he said. “ And the fact that the best of our race goes abroad. Englishmen who have travelled are the most alert.”

Friday, March 24, 1922 : One of the new arrivals in this Pau party is Bernard Falk, and the Chief has started his “ Jew baiting ” fun. It does not embarrass Falk, who stands up to it with good-humoured assurance. Only once have I seen him get a little impatient,

when Northcliffe introduced a Scots guest to Falk as "another of the faith." Said Falk, "Well, let's talk about the Scotch a bit, Chief." When the cigars came round, Falk looked at them critically and said, "If you don't mind, Chief, I would rather have one of your good ones . . . one of those the King of Spain gave you." The rest of us went hot and cold. The Chief smiled. "You can't put it over Falk," he said. "He is a connoisseur. He knows." And Falk got his gilded cigar. His candour appeals to the Chief.

From "Jews" at dinner to-night the talk changed to spiritualism. "What is the truth about it all?" said the Chief. "It is the subject making the biggest appeal to mankind at the moment. Cannot we have an entirely unbiased investigation? What a big thing it would be for us to secure the services of, say, Professor Rutherford, H. G. Wells, the Archbishop of York (or some outstanding Church figure), and one or two independent public men of logical mind, to form a committee of inquiry, to go thoroughly into the subject, examine witnesses, hold séances, and so on. You would have the ears of the whole civilised world. Think it out, Tom. I don't think Rutherford would look at it. . . . But the public interest in spiritualism is immense. Falk knows that—after his experience of the Vale Owen stuff in the *Dispatch*. . . ." Which led the Chief on to a tale, so comic that it ought to be true, of Falk and this reverend gentleman who is relating his talks

with the other world in a long series of articles in the *Dispatch*. "Falk," said the Chief, "brought Vale Owen to see me after his articles had been running for some weeks. I said to Owen, 'You must have £1,000 for your articles.' 'No,' he replied, 'not a penny.' 'Oh, ridiculous,' I said, turning away from him for a moment. When I turned round, Falk and the reverend gent. had left the room. 'Where is he?' I said to Falk, who returned alone in a few moments. 'Oh,' he replied, 'I thought I'd better get him out before he changed his mind. You'll ruin the paper throwing money about like that.' I never saw anyone whisked away so quickly, Falk. I thought at first it was a bit of real spiritualism."

. . . The Chief does not allow his absence from London to abate in any detail his close interest in the affairs of his papers. Every day copies of every edition of all his journals and periodicals arrive. They are carefully gone through, and at ten o'clock every morning a batch of telegrams is sent off to various heads of departments, praising this or blaming that. . . . Very often these criticisms are prepared by the Chief in bed in the early hours of the morning, and, although he is awake and active as early as 5.30, he is not infrequently in bed at 9 or 10 o'clock. . . . On Wednesday morning he was having one of these long bed mornings when I was summoned to the presence. He looked rather flabby and weary as he lay in bed smoking a cigarette,

his head where, had I been in the bed, my feet would have been—for he always seems to like his head away from the room wall. He most candidly invited me to read all his morning correspondence, which littered the bedroom floor. There was a long American letter full of inside information about people and movements. . . . "I have been at work since 5.30," said Northcliffe, tossing on to the floor dozens of English, French, and American newspapers, "and now it is time to issue my Orders for the Day. Like the Army, eh, Tom? It's the only way. Listen. . . ." He rang a bell. Pine, his chauffeur, appeared. "Orders, Pine. . . . You will be at the front door at 10 sharp. Take my telegrams. At 10.30 you will take Mr. Evans, Mr. Clarke, and myself to golf. . . . At 12.50 you will pick us up at the club . . ." and so on until he thought Pine had got enough orders, when he sent for one of his secretaries to take some more. . . . He gave me some telegrams to read—telegrams he was sending to various members of his staff in London. "What does that one mean?" he asked. I read it. "Well, Chief, if *I* got that telegram I should think it was a month's notice." "Oh, you would, would you? Well, perhaps you can see through a brick wall—but the man who is going to get that telegram will *not* read it that way. I am training that man. I am finding he can keep his temper . . . very stolid." Another telegram to one of his editors carried the injunction that it was to be read in the

presence of the staff and not to be hidden in the Editor's wallet. Yet another telegram was to my friend Beattie, summoning him to Pau at once. "What for, Chief?" I asked. "We'll see," was his reply. [*Note* : When Beattie arrived, the Chief had nothing to say to him at all except to tell him to enjoy Pau. He went back in a day or two quite mystified—"All the Chief talked to me about was the weather," he said.]

Saturday, March 25, 1922 : Lints Smith, manager of *The Times*, and Horace Imber, advertisement manager of the *Daily Mail*, arrived from London to-day. As we sat at luncheon in the Chief's room at the Gassion Hotel, an urgent telegram was brought in. The Chief opened it. "As I thought," he remarked quietly ; then, turning to Lints Smith, "You return to London this afternoon. The *Daily Telegraph* is coming down to three-halfpence on May 10. What did I tell you? I'm sorry your holiday is spoilt, but the place for you now is London. . . . *The Times* will be reduced to three-halfpence for *everybody* on Monday—on *Monday* . . . the day after to-morrow." (For some time past *The Times* has been three-halfpence to registered subscribers and twopence to casual buyers.) The atmosphere became rather electrical. Northcliffe sent for his secretaries. "It is now half-past one," he said. "It must be announced in the *Evening News* in London to-night that *The Times* will be three-halfpence to everybody on Monday. Take down this message and send it by wire

and wireless, and also have it telephoned to Paris for London. We must send it every way we can to make sure we get it through in time. Humphrey Davy, you ring up the Mayor and the postal chief and tell them I have vital messages which must reach London at all costs in the next hour or so. . . ." He dictated an imperative message to the Editor of the *Evening News* that the announcement about *The Times* should be put in the Stop Press. As he hustled his secretary out of the room with it, he said with a boyishness that was positively captivating, "That will shake up the complacent elders of *The Times*. That is the first they will know of it—reading it in the 'fudge' of the *Evening News*." He had not risen from the table during this excitement. "I am sorry the luncheon is upset," he went on. "You won't get much now, Tom, for I want you to go round to the telegraph office and see that that message has gone. And you, Warden (the Editor of the *Continental Daily Mail*), had better go too, seeing you know French better than any of us, and get off a message to be published in all editions of the *Weekly Dispatch* to-morrow. We have no time to lose. The *Telegraph* has got away with its *announcement*. We will get in first with the *act*. . . . As for you, Lints Smith"—and the Chief laughed merrily—"it must be the shortest holiday anyone has spent in the Pyrenees. You must be back in London to-morrow night." "There's no train," said Smith. "Then you must fly," said Northcliffe. Eventually,

without having unpacked his bag, Smith got away on a train that would take him as far as Paris, and an aeroplane was ordered to await him there and speed him across the Channel to London. Later in the evening came a telegram from London that the announcement about *The Times* had caught the later editions of the *Evening News*, had been displayed in the Stop Press prominently, and that a front page announcement was being prepared for Sunday's *Weekly Dispatch*. And as we went to bed the Chief quietly announced, "Wickham Steed [Editor of *The Times*] will arrive from Paris to-morrow."

Monday, March 27, 1922 : Wickham Steed, looking coldly intellectual and talking like a brilliant leading article, but twice as fast as you could read one, is with us. At luncheon to-day, Northcliffe put him next to Falk and tried in his jesting way to start a discussion about Jews, but Falk said he would prefer to talk about the three-halfpenny *Times*. There was a moment's silence, and then the conversation led us away to the question of the Arabs in Palestine. Steed warmed up to this subject, and was going pretty well at about two hundred words a minute when Northcliffe, who had kept very quiet, suddenly broke in, "But look at that, Steed," indicating a poster on the wall. It read :

DAILY TELEGRAPH

1½D. EVERYWHERE

ON MAY 10

The poster, which Northcliffe had got from London somehow or other, had been so placed opposite Steed that *The Times* Editor could not avoid seeing it every time he looked to his front. "That's the thing you have to think about. That's the problem you have to face. . . . Look at it. . . . Look at it." And again, when the table-talk had got to some problem of high European politics, Northcliffe would break in, almost with a snarl, "But look at it. . . . Look at it. Read it. . . . I told you it was coming. That's the fight before you. . . ." The talk went on to the subject of Bevan, the missing London financier who is supposed to have bolted to France. "Why can't they find him?" said Northcliffe. "I can find him. He is doubtless in France. Send a telegram to the *Continental Daily Mail* [published in Paris] in my name telling them to offer a reward of 25,000 francs for his discovery. That's the only way. Let the *Continental Daily Mail* do it and show its wide publicity. We cannot afford to let any other paper find him first, and no other London paper has the immense advantage, publishing in Paris and circulating all over the Continent. We will have all France searching for him in no time. . . . I'm sorry for his wife. . . . We were neighbours at Crowborough." Later in the day there came a little farewell talk with Beach Thomas about the Empire tour on which he was about to start. "I want to make the *Daily Mail*," said the Chief, "the paper for migration facts. No other

journal is bothering about migration. I have in mind a *Daily Mail* Migration Guide. We must be the leading authority on this big subject."

Thursday, March 30, 1922: Apart from the motor-trips in this fascinating district, our chief diversion is golf on the famous Pau course, which spreads itself over the plain of Billere, beyond the picturesque old château, birthplace of Henry IV, lifting its head above the poplars and chestnuts. "This," says Northcliffe, "is the oldest golf course out of Scotland, except Blackheath and possibly Calcutta." He took me to see the quaint old pictures in the golf house of famous players and English Society folk who had visited Pau sixty years ago. "Look at the hideous dresses people used to wear. What an interesting article could be written about all these long-forgotten folk and their days at Pau. Write it, Tom, for *The Times*. Say something about the course too. Go round with Sandy Thompson [the Chief's own professional, who accompanies him almost everywhere]. He knows every inch of it. When you get back to London, get Bernard Darwin to look over your article. Get the local photographer to take copies of these wonderful old pictures, and reproduce them with it. People like reading about things that take their memory back to other days—especially *Times* readers."

We played round fifteen holes the second day I was here. A rosy-cheeked English girl, who might have stepped from any country house in Hampshire or

Sussex, was ahead of us. The Chief, who could never be accused of lack of a full-blooded interest in pretty girls, watched her drive off, and said : " How English this place is. Our sun-seeking aristocrats practically own it, and have done for years. I daresay that young lady's grandmother is one of the ladies whose picture as the winner of the golf prize forty years ago we have just been looking at." He went on to tell me how the course owed its origin to a visit to the Billere Plain by two Scots officers at the time of the Battle of Orthez in 1814. Suddenly he stopped. " You are not listening," he snapped at me. " What did I say last ? "

I was well and truly caught out, and the Chief took my fumbling explanation from my lips. " You were too busy looking at that young lady's ankles, young man."

" I am sorry, Chief. It is perfectly true."

" I don't blame you," he laughed. " I have no use for a man who cannot appreciate a pretty ankle . . certainly not on my newspapers. We must not let our outlook get too middle-aged."

I smiled at the way he improved the occasion to get in a little propaganda as to what was in his mind about his newspapers.

We came in to the club house as evening began to put lovely tints on the mantle of the Pyrenees. The girl, as she motored away, called to her cavalier, " See you at the dance at the villa to-night." The Chief turned

to me : " How English it all is. And what good times all young English people with the leisure and the means get. It's good to be among young people. . . . To-night they will dance at one of the hillside villas—there are some beautiful homes here—to-morrow they will follow the famous Pau Hunt. Golf again in the afternoon, and dancing at night. . . . And they are all readers of the *Daily Mail*. Remember that. It helps you to know what news you ought to be looking out for. Think of the things those people are interested in—not so much what the London Press Club is interested in."

That night at dinner the Chief said to me : " I think we can make a golfer of you. I have asked Sandy Thompson about you. He says if you are drilled you will make a golfer. So you must be drilled by him every day. Start to-morrow. You are starting being drilled ten years younger than I was. I was too old. But golf is a study. Give your mind to it and practise regularly—real, regular drill, and you can learn it all. I drove six hundred balls from one spot the day I started. You must do the same. When you get back to London, Sandy will take you out one day a week. That is as much time as you will be able to spare from your work. You shall have him every Friday. He is the best teacher I know, and he loves teaching."

So for the past few days I have had to place myself at Sandy's beck and call. I have driven balls from one spot for two hours, until I felt as tired of the very name

of golf as one could be. But Sandy is adamant. "Just another twenty," he says. "Never mind the rain. You should have seen the Chief's enthusiasm when he was learning. Every tip I gave him he wrote down. . . . I wish he had the same enthusiasm now. He seems always to get tired about the twelfth hole. There's something on his mind. I wish I could get him to think of his golf. I am the best doctor he ever had. . . . He told me so. I wish I could get him to think of nothing but golf when he is out playing. He starts all right, and then goes off, and you can tell his thoughts are off the game. . . . He's worrying about something."

Friday, March 31, 1922 : At dinner to-night there was some talk about Lord Beaverbrook (of the *Daily Express*). Said the Chief : "Watch Beaverbrook. He is swallowing Hulton [Sir E. Hulton, owner of the *Daily Sketch* and a group of papers in Manchester]. Hulton will be absorbed. I can see it. Beaverbrook has him hypnotised. Think then of the papers Beaverbrook will control. He is no fool."

Saturday, April 1, 1922 : It is near midnight as I write these notes in my old-fashioned, heavily furnished, but most luxurious room at the celebrated Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre in the heart of historic Fontainebleau. Pau is hundreds of miles south. We left early this morning, joined the Sud-Express coming up from Spain at Dax, and proceeded to Orleans. Here the Chief and I left the train to complete the journey to Fontainebleau, forty miles on, by car. He said he wanted a night ride

through the forest. He has been restless the past day or two. He has complained about the rain, which has kept him too much indoors. Last night at dinner he looked awfully tired, though he stayed up later than usual. I looked at him as he smoked a cigar. The way he did this always caught my eye ; he invariably held it with four fingers atop and, of course, thumb underneath. He never smoked a pipe, and very seldom a cigarette. I noticed the heaviness of his eyes. He looked quite twenty years older. He seemed a little undecided in his movements as he rose and bade us his usual "Good night, boys," and he lingered about for a moment like an old man, and mumbled a word or two I did not catch. . . .

This morning he was much better, looking his old self and talking quite briskly and brightly. We nearly missed the train because of his refusal to be hustled from a lively chat in the Gassion lounge with Lady Roderick Jones—"so seldom one can talk to an extremely good looking lady with brains." At Dax we had to wait for the Sud-Express. We were told there would be no luncheon aboard. "We must get something here at Dax, then," said the Chief, but that was easier said than done. The only eating-place on the station was a mean *buvette* with no facilities for providing luncheons. We said we would do with what the buxom *bonne* could make up for us. We got hard-boiled eggs and coffee. Northcliffe sat on a little box

in the corner next to a local peasant, peeled his eggs with his fingers, and cracked jokes with the *bonne* as he drank her health in his vast mug of coffee. Like the big boy he is, he enjoyed this rough and plebeian meal, and the grim fact that neither money nor position could command a better one at the moment. . . .

When the Sud-Express came along, we soon settled down for our long journey north. I was talking to the Chief in his compartment when a tall man pushed his head in and called out a cheery, "Hullo, Alfred." "Hullo, Harry," said Northcliffe. "Come in. . . . This is the Earl of Rosslyn, Tom. . . . This one of my young men, Harry. Tell him things. . . . And you cultivate him, Tom. Get some news out of him. He knows most things that are afoot."

After Bordeaux the Chief had little to say, except now and again, after a glance at the ribbon of road alongside the metals, to indulge in reminiscence about his early motoring adventures on the Bordeaux road. . . .

Night, very cold and very dark, had fallen when we reached Orleans. The Chief's Rolls-Royce from Paris awaited us, and we stole away through the sleepy, shuttered town, Northcliffe and his valet berugged and sleeping in the saloon of the car, I in front with Pine, the chauffeur. It was not until we came to, I think, Marlotte, that the Chief tapped on the window and said, "We are in the forest now. Watch for the headlights on the rabbits." There was a quietness about him

that I have never known before. Was this the place and these the circumstances that gave peace to his restless mind? Our great headlights shot long arms among the trees, and revealed the rabbits scurrying across the road. And so we ran into Fontainebleau and a hot midnight supper.

"I have not been out of bed so late for a long time," said the Chief, "but how restful it has been. I always find peace driving by night through the forest."

Sunday, April 2, 1922: F. E. Bussy, the Director of Business Ideas and Development of Northcliffe's Newspapers—in short, the Stunt King—arrived from London to-day, and at once the Chief got his mind on to business. They discussed sky signs, the announcement of news by electric signs from some centre in London like Trafalgar Square or Piccadilly Circus. Later, with me, the Chief returned to the subject of Lord Beaverbrook and the *Daily Express*. He said those people who underrated Beaverbrook were fools. "He is a young man—far younger than I am. He is an ambitious man and a clever man. . . . But I do not worry. My plans are all made. The whole thing is very complex, and few people understand. There are several things that govern my policy—all planned out. First, there is Newfoundland, which secures my paper supply. Second, there is Gravesend, where we make paper. Third, our *Daily Mail* net sale, which means I can send a telegram to several millions of people every day.

Fourth, the insurance scheme. Fifth, *Answers*, with its great pull among the people." Feeling unable quite to catch up with all that was in his mind, I made some commonplace remark about his being very busy, with all these things to think about, and he said, "The busy man can always find time for more work. Take a man like Lord Inchcape, with his world-wide interests—probably the busiest man in the world, yet never hurried, and with time always to take on a bit more. It's the inefficient, lazy man who is always 'too busy.' The really busy man has always time to spare because he has it properly organised."

Monday, April 3, 1922 : Bussy and I were packed off to see the Napoleonic relics in the palace yesterday. "And you must see them all," said the Chief enthusiastically. "Go and see the wonderful things in the kitchen. I will send over to the chief guide. . . . See you tip him well. . . . There are lots of places they do not show to ordinary visitors. You'll find Napoleon's hat there. I once had it on. It fits me." When we returned, he cross-examined us closely as to the relics we had seen, and, mentioning some we had missed, he said, "You did not pay the guide well enough. Go back and tell him I have sent you. You must see these other things. And pay him well." In the afternoon we played golf on what the Chief described as the "most lovely and most exclusive course in the world. I have played on one hundred and fifty courses, and this is the most

beautiful. But they try to reserve it for millionaires. It is a mistake." It rained heavily, and we got wet through. The Chief got very tired and impatient. He turned in his hand at the fourteenth hole and said, "I am taking a risk. I ought not to have stayed out in the rain." When we others had played the game out and returned to the hotel, we found the Chief in bed with a temperature after his hot bath. He was breathing heavily and looking flushed. "This afternoon has done me no good," he said. "I have to be very careful. I can take no risks, so I came to bed. . . . There are all the papers from London, Tom. Compare them, and we will send off some telegrams. . . ." Later he talked of the proposed new Carmelite House. "My buildings and machines are outstripped by the great success of the *Daily Mail*. I have £1,000,000 to spare. What am I to do with it? Tell me. It is a vast responsibility. I have signed to-day a paper to spend £1,000,000 on new buildings and machinery. What would you have done? You must read the contracts and the papers. Get them from my secretary, and tell me what you would have done." But that must have been his joke, for I heard no more about the matter.

Tuesday, April 4, 1922 : Leaving the Chief to golf yesterday afternoon with Lord Rosslyn, who came down from Paris with Ashmead Bartlett, I went shopping with one of the secretaries. We bought for our kiddies a couple of miniature, but real, pistols, about

an inch in length only, but firing the tiniest of cartridges. We talked of revolvers and their uses. The Chief has told this secretary he ought to learn how to handle a revolver, as his (the Chief's) life has been in danger several times, and a man in close attendance on him like a secretary should be armed for emergency.

When we got back, the Chief asked us to go back and buy twenty more of the toy pistols. "I must get a lot of these for my children friends," he said. Then he, too, began to talk of the danger of a violent death, and related an incident, not without its amusing side, of the previous night. It appears he has put his two secretaries in a bedroom to reach which they must pass through his—probably his way of ensuring that they come in early. But one of them, Humphrey Davy, came home rather later than usual last night, and, creeping into the Chief's room very quietly, was mistaken by the valet in an adjoining room for an intruder. As the Chief said, "My valet, Frederic, has always said I shall be murdered in my sleep—there have been several attempts, you know—and he said to himself, 'Here is the assassin at last,' and he went for poor Davy, discovering his mistake only in the nick of time. Davy was so scared that he spent last night on a couch outside my room, fearing to risk disturbing me a second time."

At lunch, Rosslyn asked for a glass of port. There was a shortage, so the Chief called Humphrey Davy to deliver up the bottle he is allowed when reading to the

Chief at night. Davy was much upset, as it was the last bottle.

Wednesday, April 5th, 1922 : At luncheon to-day was a tall man, rather carelessly dressed, as if he had come from the Latin Quarter, and very shy. "See that man," said the Chief. "Doesn't he look exactly like a foreign correspondent of *The Times*, with that hair and hat, and those clothes?" "He does," I said. "Well, so he is—or is about to be. That is Sisley Huddleston. I have this morning given him the appointment of Paris correspondent of *The Times*. Come and meet him." I found Huddleston a charming and most informative man, but with not the slightest interest in the Chief's immediate occupation, golf. He obviously wanted to talk about his new job and high matters of French policy. "Walk round with us at golf and talk," said the Chief, and poor Huddleston, obviously bored to death with the pursuit of the little white ball, followed us like a mourner, and, instead of high politics, this was the sort of gossip he got :

"Now, look at that man over there. He is a good golfer. I can tell by his walk. All good golfers give at the knees. When you get back to London, Tom, get Bob Howard [our golf writer] to write an article on the golfer's walk, and illustrate it with photographs of famous players' knees. . . . You ought to take up golf, Huddleston. It would make you look less like a foreign correspondent. . . . What was that you were saying

about Lloyd George? . . . Give me my niblick. . . . Tell Steed about it. . . . There goes the man with the golfer's walk again. . . . Let's see how you walk, Huddleston. . . ."

To-night, Bussy and I strolled about the town. There is little else to do. Very boring after Pau. Bussy told me the history of the Ideal Homes Exhibition which he first organised in 1908. It has always been a great success. It began through the Chief realising that newspapers were entering on a new era—that more people were going to read them; that they would be bigger, and would have to develop the comparatively new and little-understood service of advertising. He told Bussy to think out how industries could be got to realise the arrival of days of advertising. Bussy got down to it. At that time there were practically no builders' advertisements. That was the industry to start with. Houses. It was an easy step to think of homes rather than houses—homes, gardens, kitchen gadgets, fireplaces—all the things young people getting married wanted. A great reader appeal as well as an advertiser appeal. So was born the Ideal Homes Exhibition, now by way of becoming a national institution.

Bussy has a method of signalling to his staff at the exhibition by coloured lights. The signals can be seen from all parts of the building, and are in colours, or combinations of colours, representing different instructions or messages. The Chief went unannounced to the

exhibition one day. He wanted to surprise the staff. He wore blue goggles as a disguise, and he caught Bussy unexpectedly. He saw the signalling contraption. It was explained to him that there were sixteen variations ; one signal meant, " The King has arrived " ; another, " All staff report to office at once " ; and so on. " You've explained all the signals but one," said the Chief ; " that flickering white light which is now active." " That," said Bussy, " is the signal that *you* are in the building." " Hm ! " said the Chief. " Don't put anything of that sort in Carmelite House, or you'll be sacked."

Thursday, April 6, 1922 : We motored to Paris on our way to London this morning—the Chief, Bussy, and I. As we were leaving Fontainebleau, the majestic white-haired old lady who runs the Hôtel de France et d'Angleterre with the dignity of a viscountess said to the Chief, " And I hear, my lord, that you have sold *The Times*. Is it possible ? " " I shall have to do so in order to pay your bill," he laughingly replied. Whereupon she said, " Ah, I shall give you a tip," and handed him a gold louis. " Well," said Northcliffe, " that is the first time I have been given a tip in my life, and, as it is from a lady, I cannot refuse it." And he kissed her hand. . . .

We arrived in Paris just before 11 o'clock. " I have an appointment at the Hôtel de Crillon with Mr. Adolph Ochs, owner of the *New York Times*," said the

Chief to me. "I will leave the car when we reach the hotel, and you and Bussy can go on to the *Continental Daily Mail* office in the rue du Sentier and pick up Goudie. Come back for me at the hotel at 11.30 sharp." Then he turned quickly. "No," he said, "you shall come with me to see Ochs, Tom. It will be a great privilege. He is one of the greatest newspaper men alive. But I can give you only one minute of my time with him . . . one minute only, you hear. You shall just come in his room and stay one minute and then leave us." Afterwards the Chief said, "My half-hour with Adolph Ochs was worth £10,000 to me. . . . No, it was not half an hour. You stole one minute of it. You can work out now what your minute was worth. He has a wonderful mind about newspapers."

In the car on our way to the Gare du Nord to join the boat-train for Calais the Chief talked to me as he has never talked before, a little sadly it seemed, about the false gods men worship. I cannot think exactly how the talk began, except there was some reference to his great worries about his vast newspaper responsibilities and that he was rather tired. "I cannot go on working always," he said in a tone quite new to me, who had always known him as eagerness and action personified. "I only work on now because of the hundreds of shareholders, many of them widows, who look to me. I am responsible to them. I work for them, not for myself. I have nothing more to work for. I have all

the money and all the social position I want. Social position is nothing to me, and never has been anything. Titles don't appeal to me. . . . You are a young man. Don't worry about these things. The important thing is poise. How a man handles a situation is a much more important thing than the situation itself. Poise in all things and at all times. So few men have it. . . . I have suffered from one disability throughout my career. You would never guess it." I wondered what confession was coming. "I suffer from the fact that I was not at Oxford," he went on quietly. "You have a son? Send him to a good Public School and then to Oxford. But not for three years. That is too much. One year is quite enough. It is a great asset. It means such a lot to a man. It gives him in his impressionable years that foundation of poise among his fellow-creatures which can be got nowhere else."

"If you had gone to Oxford, Chief, do you think you would have been where you are?"

"That is not the question," he snapped, and changed the subject.

We passed a kerb market, and his mood passed as quickly as it had come. He pointed out the different people, and discussed them vivaciously. But shortly he came back to more or less the same train of thought.

He said, "The danger in businesses like ours is that they get settled down. People running them get comfortably off, 'money-logged,' and have no incentive to

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new enterprises. They forget that if you do not go forward you must go back. We must always be thinking of new blood. That's why, on my return from the United States, I pushed you young men forward. You have all had a share in getting the business on the aggressive again. Our outlook has been re-inspired. We have realised we have to fight to hold our laurels and that we must not under-estimate our rivals. When I add some younger blood to my directorate, as I will do shortly, my new men must be more than able men at their job, though. First and foremost, they must be able to get on with other people, able to avoid bluster, able to delegate. Nor is the man who won't pool brains any use. You know there are people who think of one paper only, instead of thinking of all my business as a whole and of my several newspapers. They are men of little ideas. They will never be directors. The man who holds up a 'scoop' for the *Daily Mail* and lets the *Evening News* miss it is no friend to our business. The business is much bigger than one branch of it. . . . And I don't believe in big salaries for young men [this seemed to me a nasty fly in the ointment]. Make them think that there's one coming along. It spurs their ambition."

Most of the time on the boat-train we spent talking with Claude Johnson, of the Rolls-Royce Company, the Chief exhorting me never to hesitate to ring Johnson up and get a Rolls-Royce for important editorial journeys—"It adds so much to our paper's prestige."

Nearing Calais, Northcliffe rose to point out the place where once Napoleon camped when he cherished the hope of invading England. Napoleon is obviously always much in his mind. On the boat at Calais he took a schoolboy's interest in watching the struggling crowds come aboard with their baggage. "There is nothing so interesting as studying people like this," he said. "I wish there was another boatload. This scene has never been properly described. Send a man over to write it up. These are the things people like reading about."

Travelling with the Chief is rather a royal progress. At Paris high officials came to escort us to the train ; at Calais the Prefect kept a passage for us to the gangway and came to present his compliments ; at Dover some braided personage held the gangway till we had left the ship. In the boat-train for London, tea awaited us on a flower-decked table. Surrounded with all the newspapers he could buy, Northcliffe, just before the train steamed out, sent a telegram to Carmelite House revealing his presence on English soil again. "They think I am miles away in the south of France," he chuckled. "They little guessed that the earthquake was so near."

As I said good-bye at Victoria Station the Chief said : "Now, this trip has not to cost you a halfpenny—not even for the cigarette you are smoking. Put everything down and send the bill to Sir Andrew. See you make 'em pay."

CHAPTER XIII

LAST NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES : WOMEN AND JOURNALISM

April 13, 1922 : This morning I was in my bath at 7.30 when the Chief telephoned. "Have you read that paragraph in the paper from Paris this morning," he asked, "saying that Paris is not in favour of the short skirt for women? What a great talking point. Every woman in the country will be excited about it. We must start an illustrated discussion on 'THE BATTLE OF THE SKIRTS : LONG v. SHORT.' Get different people's views. Cable to New York and Paris. Get plenty of sketches by well-known artists—photographs and drawings illustrating the comparisons between the long and the short skirts. Get hold of back numbers of *Punch*, with illustrations of the ugly long skirts of a decade ago. Print as many as you can. Get people like Arthur Ferrier and Gladys Peto to draw pictures of the modern girl in her alluring short skirt. Plenty of legs. Let the reader compare the old fashion with the new."

Before I had finished breakfast he was through on the telephone again.

"What have you done about it?" he asked.

"I have arranged to start the stories and sketches to-morrow," I said.

"Good," he replied. "Our girls should not be compelled to do what Paris says. The short skirt is common sense. But give all opinions. It will be a terrific discussion. Interview the sports girls. How can they play golf in long skirts, or tennis? And don't forget, plenty of pictures and sketches of pretty ankles. Make your bill to-morrow 'THE BATTLE OF THE SKIRTS.'"

Later in the day he talked to me about a lady whose work had displeased him. He asked me to see her and tell her that if that sort of thing happened again he would cease to employ her. "Frighten her," he said. "Women have no sense of responsibility unless you frighten them. I understand women. They do not understand discipline unless they are going to lose something." Then he talked of the weather. "Everybody is talking about it to-day, but of course there will be nothing about it in the *Daily Mail* to-morrow. It is most vital news. Put it at the top of your news schedule every day, whatever the weather is like, so that everybody will be reminded of it at the conference. There should be a story in the paper every day about the weather."

Monday, April 17, 1922 : For the first time for many months the Chief came to Carmelite House in person to-day. He arrived shortly after 11 a.m. How he shook everything up ! The reason for his visit was to-morrow's paper—a big 16-pager—which he says is to be a great

Easter holiday paper. He was in great form—keen as a tiger, snapping out questions, opinions, decisions. He called in Caird, Campbell Stuart, Akerman, myself, and heads of technical departments. He sat in his old chair in Room One with the dummy make-up of the 16-pager before him. Blue pencil in hand, he peered at us through his horn-rimmed spectacles, the old eagerness in his manner, the old impatience of talk. "I want to get this paper of ours up to the two millions. I want to turn the whole business on to the aggressive again." There were to be new insurance announcements, a new net sales statement, an article by himself, "Watch Japan," and Tom Webster was to write of Jack Dempsey (who arrives to-day). Every editorial department was to do something very special in the way of features. There were to be two pages of pictures; Miss Cohen (Editress of the woman's page) was to have double space. The leader page should drop its routine aspect and there should be a "streamer" right across the two middle pages.

A nervous chap from the advertisement department was brought in to talk about the sort of type. Northcliffe asked him some quick-fire questions which the poor fellow could not answer. The Chief lost his temper.

"Inefficiency," he snapped out. "Why do they send a man to me who does not know? Go out, man, and send someone who knows his business. I don't blame you so much as the man who sent you to me. Tell him

to see me. Now go. You have merely wasted my time." After arranging the length and position of the different leading features, the Chief left. On the stairway he talked to me rather plaintively, I thought, of the many important things he had on hand that day—"not only here," he said. "I am getting overworked. . . . But you must have a very strong paper to-morrow. We must alter its appearance for this one day. Surprise people. This is an emergency—a big day for us." I have never seen him so enthusiastically at work before.

Thursday, April 20, 1922 : Chief very angry to-day. I sent a wireless in Tom Webster's name to Jack Dempsey at sea asking him to reply. He did—the only "interview" he gave by wireless—and we should have had it exclusively for Tuesday's great paper. It came addressed to Webster, who was away, and Crockett (Sporting Editor) put it unopened in his (Tom Webster's) "personal" rack. "Send Crockett to see me—here—at 1 Carlton Gardens," said the Chief. "Doesn't he know—doesn't everyone know—that all private messages sent to the office are to be opened? I gave that instruction years ago. Even if addressed to *me*, and marked Personal and Private and Confidential, they are to be opened. Send Crockett to me." . . . Later in the day I risked a lot by telephoning direct to the Chief, a thing we are forbidden to do, and pleaded for Crockett. Chief was at lunch. "My dear Tom," he said, "is that all you wanted me for? My bark is worse

than my bite. Don't you worry." Later in the day, when he 'phoned me, I apologised for having 'phoned him. "At any time," he said, "I expect *you* to telephone me if you think fit. That's what I am there for. I shall soon kick you if you do it without real reason."

Friday, April 21, 1922 : The article "Watch Japan," written by Northcliffe, has caused a lot of comment, especially as the Prince of Wales is at the moment the guest of the Japanese. It dealt with Japan's land hunger, her naval and military plans and ambitions, her twenty-one demands in China. He had it cabled all over the world.

To-day the Chief gave a little luncheon-party at Carlton Gardens to meet Jack Dempsey, the world's heavy-weight boxing champion. Tom Webster had organised the affair. "Tell Tom," the Chief had said, "that I would like Dempsey at lunch. He must find out who Dempsey would like to meet. These people like meeting earls and dukes and people like that. Let me know whom Dempsey wants to meet and I will do it." General Groves was there, also General A. A. Swinton, author of *The Green Curve*, and for some time the official "Eye-Witness" with the British Forces in France during the Great War. Dempsey is a quiet fellow. He was well dressed in a blue lounge suit, but his collar fitted rather wobbly. Someone present told me that he had fifty smart suits with him. He was not keen on talking about boxing, nor was he keen on eating.

All he had was an apple and a bit of toast. He ran rather amok (as Americans excusably do) in his titles when making his little speech in reply to the Chief. He spoke of Northcliffe as "The lord." "When the lord asked me here . . ."

After the luncheon the Chief talked to me about people in the office. He asked so many details that I said, "We shall have to prepare an office *Who's Who*."

"Excellent idea," he said. "Do it. Call it *The Carmelite House Who's Who*. We know nothing about our men—what hidden talent, what experience, there is among them. I would get a circular printed to say that the object of the book is to discover hidden talent, hidden knowledge, hidden ambitions. Head it: 'The information in this book is to be revised every six months.' Get a questionnaire ready. These are some of the things to be asked, but no one need answer if he does not wish to. Send the list to every man in the building. (1) Name, address, and 'phone number. (2) What is your ambition in life? (3) Where have you been? (4) Where do you spend your holidays? (5) What are your sports and hobbies? (6) Are you married? (7) Languages? (8) Do you write shorthand? (9) What special subject are you interested in? . . . This will be a most valuable work, and probably the first of its kind. You must get a first-class man to prepare it."

I also told him of a man who rang me up the other day, and, asking the paper to do him a favour, rather

pompously announced that he was a shareholder. The Chief said, "You should have given him hell. I get lots of letters from shareholders. My reply is unprintable unless their request concerns the shareholders' profit, which they are, of course, entitled to know about. . . ."

April 28: The Chief was at a dinner party with Sir James Barrie last night. "He's a good talker," the Chief told me, "but I had to get away early so as to be up at 5.30 this morning to see to my business. How would *you* like that?"

* * *

During April-May 1922 came the famous "shake-up" of the advertisement department, an incident which has passed into the Fleet Street "classics." The Chief had been complaining that our advertisements were bludgeoning the rest of the paper. He said the post-war public was less indifferent to appeals to the eye than former generations. Advertisements in ugly type spoiled the appearance of the news pages. He wanted things more balanced. Rightly or wrongly, he felt he was not carrying the advertisement department—who, of course, had their own difficulties in the matter—all the way with him. He got impatient, and announced that he had appointed Mr. Glover, the commissionaire, as Censor of Advertisements.

That was pretty severe on the heads of the department, and wiseacres in later days have said it was a sign of Northcliffe's coming breakdown. Yet he was

always a great boy, and when he thought he met with opposition he adopted a boy's puckish methods of overcoming it. I remember his ringing me up to tell me of his scheme. With an uncomfortable thought that he might one day appoint the office-boy as a Censor of News, I said he must be joking. "You won't really do that, Chief, will you?" I asked.

"Why not? Of course I will. An American newspaper owner I know could not get his pictures right, so he appointed the engineer of his yacht as Picture Editor, and he was a great success. . . . Someone has been saying I am off my head. Not you, is it, Tom?"

To mark the occasion, the Chief gave a luncheon-party on Monday, May 1, at Carlton Gardens, and the principal guest was our stalwart commissioner. Surrounding him were young men from the advertisement department, and to them Glover, of whom the Chief gave warning that he stripped at 18 stone and had a longer reach than Dempsey, was presented as the bludgeoner of bludgeoning advertisements. I saw Glover after the luncheon. He was embarrassed. Young reporters touched their hats, and jokingly said they wanted more salary, and would he put in a word with the Chief. Glover told me the Chief had given him authority to inspect the advertisements, but he seemed very uncomfortable. That night I saw Horace Imber (the Chief calls him "Lord Imber"), our advertisement director, at the theatre.

"I am starting a holiday to-night," he said grimly.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"To Coventry," he said—we both laughed—"and I shan't come back till I am allowed to control my own department."

Wednesday, May 3, 1922: How long will the Chief last? That he himself is wondering is disclosed in a talk we had to-day after the farewell luncheon to W. J. Evans, the director who has played so great a part in building up Carmelite House. The Chief spoke with some emotion at the luncheon, and intimated that he would not stay on working one day longer than was necessary. He rang me up later.

"You will be attending a farewell of that sort to me one day," he said.

"Oh, not yet awhile," I replied.

"Don't be too sure. I am only about two years junior to Evans. Think of it. . . . I shall not stay on when my powers begin to go. One cannot keep it up always. Of course, I have had advantages that have conserved my energy. I do not know how Evans has stood it for so long. But I am getting on. . . . You young men will not have me always. I am growing older every day."

At the luncheon he had spoken of the task of bringing out an evening newspaper day after day as being the most nerve-wracking job he knew. He stressed the supreme value of judgment. "A man may be brilliant, energetic, and all that, but it is judgment that tells—

MARLOWE'S JUDGMENT

judgment of the kind exercised by Mr. Marlowe during my absence, when he stopped those H. G. Wells's articles which were offensive to France. I was in China at the time, and people asked me about them. I said, 'I know nothing about the matter, but I rely on Mr. Marlowe's judgment.' "

Monday, May 8, 1922 : I went down to Southampton on Saturday for the inspection by the Press of the White Star liner *Majestic*, and by chance got hold of a story that no other paper had about some new travel amenities. The Chief to-day rang up and asked who wrote the story. "I thought so," he said, when I told him. "That comes of having been to New York in one of these liners. I am now getting back some of the expenses of your trip there. Who were the other journalists there? None of them, I suppose, had been to America, or knew anything of the real life in an Atlantic liner? . . . It is extraordinary how few of our people really like to travel and see other countries. How many of your young men know anything of our Paris or Manchester offices—or even of the paper works at Gravesend? Very few. If any of them want to go, send them. I am willing to pay. Of course, America and Newfoundland are out of the question just now, but if any young man wants to go to Paris or Manchester, let him go at my expense."

Thursday, May 11, 1922 : At an Empire Press luncheon yesterday to welcome him back from his world tour

the Chief complained that the reporters had been put in a back place where they could not hear. Lord Burnham, who was in the chair, at once put the matter right. The Chief told me he hoped I never allowed reporters to be stultified—coming in with the coffee, or occupying back seats. He thought reporters to-day were too humble, and said that Sala and others of his day would not have agreed to be treated like outcasts. They would have left the meeting without reporting it. It was noted at the luncheon what an effective public speaker Lord Northcliffe is becoming. His chief point was to demand the removal of the embargo on the importation of Canadian cattle, and he went out of his way to praise the attitude of Lord Beaverbrook on this question. . . . The Chief is getting ready for another tour, and it is hinted he may go to Germany, but he is most secretive about it. He is anxious about my golf progress, and makes almost daily inquiries. "Keep it secret," he says. "I want you to surprise some of our 'higher-ups,' some of our golfing directors, by beating them." Alas, he should see me play! He is still very keen on "THE BATTLE OF THE SKIRTS," which "stunt," under the capable direction of George Curnock, is still going strong. We got Lady Diana Cooper to write an article on the subject this morning. The Chief told me it was good, but, like the skirts, a little too long. He told me to watch the trade side of the topic, as great and far-reaching changes were

STAND BY FRANCE !

probable. The Chief was in the office before 5 o'clock this morning—to see for himself, as he said, why the papers were getting late in publication. He's been on the warpath about it to-day.

* * *

The Empire Press Union luncheon was the last occasion on which I saw the Chief, though he spoke to me on the telephone frequently after that.

The Genoa Conference was proceeding during May, and the Chief was again on the track of Lloyd George, alleging that he had been duped by the Russians, and that the Americans had more sense and had wisely refused to have anything to do with Genoa. "Stand by France and Belgium," was the Chief's slogan in reference to the reported threat of Lloyd George to break with France if she did not fall in with the conference proposals. He rang me up from Broadstairs to print all the letters we received supporting our attitude. "This threat to France," he said, "has led that country to mistrust us. They are increasing their air squadrons." He complained that our politicians were under the thumb of "propagandizing Jews." He went on to talk of other matters. It was late in the afternoon, and he said he had been entertaining a few guests at his Broadstairs home. He was not speaking as clearly as usual, and he flitted erratically from one thing to another. Somehow or other he came to the subject of Scotsmen. He expressed great admiration for their

caution and their canniness. "When there is trouble about, they always leave a door open," he said. "I myself have 50 per cent. of Scottish blood, and I have a large respect for it. But I have also 40 per cent. Celtic or Irish, and the rest from Hampshire or somewhere like that. Don't be led by the Scots or the Jews." . . . He also spoke contemptuously of our office dances, which have been stopped through his criticism of our asking an advertiser to buy tickets. He says the women don't want them as they see enough of Carmelite House men without wanting to dance with them. He concluded : " Well, good-bye. I have a very strange party down here, and one of your friends is holding his own by keeping his mouth shut."

Wireless broadcasting was at hand. The Chief wanted to be well in front, and three of our directors and myself went to Marconi House. We pointed to America and Godfrey Isaacs said : " Don't blame the United States. This business was started by your Melba concert. But the Americans got on to the development of it quicker than we did. The Melba concert was the real start of broadcasting." We had in mind a *Daily Mail* Marconi broadcasting service, but it came to nothing, because of Post Office opposition. So we rented an amateur station in Holland, beyond the control of the British authorities, to give from the Hague the first organised wireless broadcasting service for Great Britain. The Chief was neither enthusiastic

nor cold. He just observed. He was suspicious as to where broadcasting would lead us. He felt a new rival was at hand, especially in the matter of sporting results.

Monday, May 15, 1922 : To-day my reporting staff is augmented by a pretty young peeress, the Baroness Clifton. She has been sent to me by the Chief to have "six months' run at £20 a week." He met her aboard ship on his return from his world tour, and she told him she would like to be a journalist. He has taken her at her word. "She is a pretty young thing," he said, "who is bored with doing nothing, and it will be a great asset to have a pretty young woman belonging to such an old family on your staff. She is fragile and very sensitive, and you will lose her if you don't treat her nicely. The ordinary drudgery of reporting would kill her. Have you looked her up in the *Peerage*? She is a very high-up young person. I am about number 3,000, having got there after much pushing and shoving. But she is much higher up than that."

Having had amateur journalists turned loose on me before, oftener than not with very unsatisfactory results, I did not feel particularly gleeful when the good lady reported for duty this morning. As a little concession to the occasion, I received her in the most ornate room in Carmelite House—Room One. I had taken the Chief's hint and looked her up in Debrett, had found that she was twenty-two, was the youngest peeress in her own right, and the only daughter of the

late seventh Earl of Darnley, a descendant of the Stewarts. As she entered the room wearing a black fur coat scarlet lined, and in every way as charming and beautiful as the Chief had promised, I wondered to myself, "Whatever can I do with the woman?" It was soon evident that she was thinking, "Whatever can he do with me?" She told me, very quietly, that she was a little bored with London after eighteen months' Embassy life in Peking. "If I do not work hard to keep me occupied," she said, "I shall go back to China." There we found a topic of common interest, and we talked a while of places both of us had visited in China. But this did not solve the immediate problem of what work to give the young lady. Obviously she would have been of rare value on the social staff, but she turned big, dark eyes on me when that was mentioned and said, "I would rather not. I want to do real reporting."

"Not murders and fires and that sort of thing?" I said in jest.

"Oh, I should love to report a murder or go to a big trial," she said eagerly. I remembered the Chief's warning about the ordinary drudgery of reporting and said, "Well, perhaps later on . . ."

"And," she proceeded, "I would like to go to places like Chinatown and write about them."

"But," I said, "what would your people say if I sent you down to Limehouse? I would not like the responsibility."

"Oh, that would be quite all right," she said.

"Well, later on, perhaps," I said, "but in the meantime let's get you on to some brighter aspects of London life. What about a special article about the lure of the London shops, behind the scenes in Bond Street and Hanover Square, the debutantes choosing their frocks, the progress of the battle of the skirts?" She grasped the idea with a woman's enthusiasm, and later in the day sent a messenger with a crisp, well-written story giving all the facts with an atmospheric dressing that was quite unlike anything else in the paper. I rang her up to tell her she had not signed the article. It needed no signature, of course, to add to its merits or justify its publication, but I had a feeling that what we were paying for was her name as much as anything else. However, she said that for the present she preferred not to reveal her identity, and she made it clear that she wanted to succeed as a writing woman on the merits of her work alone, not because, but maybe in spite, of her being a peeress. "And," she said, "that room you received me in this morning is not your ordinary room, is it? No? Well, I want to come and see you daily in your ordinary room where the other reporters come. I shall be there to-morrow."

While I was reading at home to-night the young lady's mother telephoned me and rather agitatedly said she understood her daughter was to go to Chinatown to write about things there. She hoped I would

not send her there. If that were my intention, her stepfather (Admiral Leveson) intended to come down and see me. I said the Admiral need not trouble, as it was not my intention to do anything of the kind.

Tuesday, May 16, 1922 : There were many inquiries to-day as to the identity of the writer of the article on the Lure of the Shops which was headed "BY THE WOMAN CORRESPONDENT." Even such a practised man-of-the-world journalist as Charlie Hands said it was delightful and original stuff, and my disclosure to him of the writer's identity moved him to some very far-seeing remarks on the subject of women in journalism. "In ten years," he said, "and maybe before, you will see a revolution . . . more women than ever in newspaper work, reporting, sub-editing, news-editing, even editing. It's bound to come. All the advantages are with women. Firstly, they don't drink. Secondly, they are more in touch with the realities of life. Who goes to the theatres and concerts and dances? Woman. Who goes to the shops and takes an interest in dress and fashion? Woman. From infancy her education in dress is a never-ending school of taste. Women are better judges; they have more taste; they are more human. Look at their knowledge and experience of the home. Their outlook is really wider than that of men." Which reminded me of a recent talk on the same subject with Northcliffe. He was not so sure that there would be an avalanche of women in journalism, but he did say that

a great measure of the success of his papers was due to the interest they took in feminine affairs. "The old-fashioned stodgy papers," he said, "were for men only. They ignored news of interest to women. Now we look out specially for it. Women are the greatest newspaper readers. There were no news stories about the crinoline, but there are the liveliest news stories about the short skirt. Don't forget the women when you are framing your dailyschedule. And don't forget that they read every scrap of social news you can get, especially names. They read serials too. Don't be bluffed by journalists with only a man's outlook. Read the woman's page every day. And ask your advertising friends who reads the newspapers nowadays."

But to get back to Lady Clifton. Northcliffe rang up to-day and said about her, "We have found a winner. But why did you not use her name?" I told him. "Try to persuade her to sign herself ELIZABETH CLIFTON," he said, "by which name most people will know her. Later she will probably sign her real name. But don't hurry her. She will come round in time. I understand women. Talk to her in a quiet way about the other one [Lady Diana Cooper, who has been writing signed articles for us on occasions recently]. Just mention casually about how the other one is getting her name in print. Women have more jealousy than men. Just talk diplomatically about Lady Diana." Lady Clifton scored another success to-day with her work,

and she has captured the hearts of all the young and old bloods in the reporters' room. She is certainly the best young writer-reporter I have ever had to try out. To-night I said to her, "I don't think you quite like being called *the* woman correspondent." "No," she laughed, "it does sound rather biological, doesn't it?" So it has been altered to *our* woman correspondent.

Thursday, May 18, 1922 : Telephoning me to-day, the Chief said, "I am getting older. I am going on for three or four years and then I am going to turn over the business to you young fellows. Did you read that paragraph in our City Chat yesterday? [This paragraph reported that a block of our deferred shares had been offered for sale at £3 10s. per share, and added that this placed an exaggerated value on earning power and intrinsic value. It also stated that the holding of such shares conferred no political or literary influence whatever, the control being in the hands of one individual.] I do not know the people who are reported to be offering these shares. I can't stop them. Do you know the Germans have been buying our shares? I can't stop them. But, of course, you are not to worry. I have made all my arrangements for the disposal of affairs when I decide to go."

"But that will not be yet awhile."

"I can't go on for ever, my dear boy. That's plain. But you will be all right. None of you young men will suffer. I have provided for that. None of those who

have served the company and stood by me need worry about how they will be affected. . . . Well, what's the news? Will it be a good paper to-morrow? I am going away soon, you know, and probably taking my lady with me. She insists on going this time. I am going to Holland. Have you been there? A pretty country. I knew it well twenty years ago. What do you think I am going for? Do you know? . . . Well, I see that W. R. Hearst is coming to England next week, and it has been announced in the United States that I am going to present his wife at COURT. I can only think the fellow who made that announcement has gone quite mad. . . . Now Campbell Stuart, who looks farther ahead than most people, said to me, 'If Hearst comes to England, he will say you are going to sponsor him. I think a little Continental tour will be good for your health.' Now, do you see it?" He laughed heartily and went on: "I shall be away from England till July. . . . Have you seen my new pamphlet, *Newspapers and Their Millionaires*? This Big Worm is turning at last. You will see what I mean when you get the pamphlet. These other newspapers have been at me for years. I have never retaliated. By the way, in the advertisement of the pamphlet don't print my photograph. They did it in *The Times* this morning, and my mother says I look like a codfish."

Sunday, May 21, 1922 : Lloyd George returned from the Genoa Conference yesterday. The Chief asked me

to go to Victoria Station and let him know how the crowd received the Prime Minister. "Don't attack Lloyd George," he said to me, telephoning from Broadstairs to-day. "There's no need. He is going downhill fast enough without it. But you can attack the bad organisation of the reception. People talk of my vendetta against Lloyd George. I have no vendetta. But I am glad Poy is dropping the genial Lloyd George cartoons. The French cartoons of the Prime Minister are the ones to study."

The Chief mentioned his forthcoming Continental trip, and I said, "They say you are going to Germany."

"Don't try to ask questions," he replied and went on to talk of our dangerous roads because of the men and women speed-devils on wheels. He said police on motor-cycles should be used to catch them. Our roads wanted rebuilding for this enormous motor traffic. "Send a reporter to describe road dangers."

He telephoned me again to-night and was shocked to hear of the sinking of the *Egypt* off Ushant, the ship in which he came home from the East.

"It is the last ship I was on," he said, "and it hurts me. . . . I can see my rooms. Lady Clifton was a passenger. Get her to write something. The captain was to stay with me. What's your bill?"

"P. AND O. LINER SUNK," I said.

"No," he replied, "'MANY LIVES LOST IN SUNK P. AND O.' That's your bill. Good night, Tom. This makes me very sad."

CHAPTER XIV

THE GERMAN VISIT AND AFTER

Thursday, May 25, 1922 : To-day, before his departure from England, the Chief rang me up for a farewell talk. "I shall be away for six weeks," he said, "and you will hear very little of me, but I shall come back with bags of ideas and copy." He talked of many things—he has become rather difficult on the telephone lately, as if he were not speaking into the receiver, and making long statements, jumping quickly from one thing to another and then suddenly disappearing from the telephone. . . . One thing he talked about was what he described as "office nepotism." He has caused much consternation by objecting to anybody having relatives working in the office. "I have offended three hundred of my relatives by refusing to give them jobs," he said, "and now I hear of all these other people's relatives in Carmelite House and in Printing House Square. What can I say? It must be stopped. . . . I will appoint a man whose special job it shall be." . . . I remembered he had mentioned this to me at Pau, but in a jocular sort of way. He had told me that one of his relatives was given a job, "but he did not pull his weight, and, when called over the coals by the head of the department,

I FIRED HIM !

he asked if they thought he was going to be a fool and work when he had a relation 'like Alfred'—that's me ! So I fired him. That's the danger of letting relatives work for you." Another thing he talked of was Seymour Hicks's play, *The Man in Dress Clothes*. On his instructions we are giving it a daily notice in the *Daily Mail*. "Keep it up," said Northcliffe, "until he gets thoroughly tired of it. Don't stop it if he asks you to. Wait till you get instructions from me. Have you seen the play ? It succeeds because it makes people laugh and cry. Have you ever been hungry ? Go and see the hungry man in that play." He also mentioned the Berry brothers, "clever people of whom I keep hearing. What are their interests in newspapers ? They are very clever and ambitious."

[*Note*.—A prophetic reference to the future Lords Buckland and Camrose, and Sir Gomer Berry, who, with Sir Edward Iliffe, leapt to the front of newspaper ownership and, after Northcliffe's death, acquired control of his Amalgamated Press and its periodicals.]

* * *

The Chief quietly disappeared from London. I had messages from him, but I had heard his voice for the last time and was never to see him again. One message came on May 30, from Brussels. It protested against an article holding up the United States as a paradise for women, and told me that was an untruthful sneer at England, as it was well known that water had to be

fetched in buckets winter and summer in most American villages. It asked me also to keep his address secret. I surmised he was on the eve of entering Germany.

On Saturday, June 3, a message came to me through his secretary. This was the day of the qualifying round at Bramshot for the Northcliffe Golf Cup, and apparently he looked on it as a test of my progress in golf. He had been sending Sandy Thompson every Friday to "drill" me, so that, as he said, I should surprise the golf experts in the office. He had insisted on keeping these golf lessons a secret, "for I want you to give Sir Andrew Caird a shock by beating him." The message from his secretary was that the Chief had instructed him to say I should be sacked if I failed to qualify. Luckily I scraped through.

* * *

Monday, June 5, 1922 : The Chief is at Boulogne, back from Germany. He is dissatisfied with what he considers the small announcement we have made of his forthcoming articles on Germany, especially as he says he risked his life by going there. He went to Germany under an assumed name because he feared animosity. His first article emphasises German prosperity and the terrific birth-rate.

Thursday, June 8, 1922 : Last week-end, Valentine Williams, our brilliant Foreign Editor who had also been making his mark as a best-selling novelist, resigned because the Chief had sent him word that no man could

serve two masters and he ought to choose between foreign editing and novel-writing. Northcliffe, who rapped my knuckles, shortly before he went away, for taking sides with Williams in this matter, sent a message that I was to act in Williams's place as well as continuing my ordinary duties as "Day Editor," as he now calls me. To-night I went out to dinner with Williams, and afterwards we talked at the Guards Club. Williams, who has for some years been one of Northcliffe's young stars, is naturally upset, "but," he said (and I shall never forget his words), "there is a person who will be with me to the end of my days—my other self, or my conscience, call it what you like. Had I put up any longer with the Chief's bludgeoning, that other self would have whispered for all my lifetime in my ears that I was a moral coward. There comes a time when, at all risks, you must square your actions with your conscience. That's why I resigned. I am ready to agree that the Chief's point of view about no man serving two masters may be correct, though it's a small point in this affair. It's the culmination of many things, and I'm glad to have it ended."

Friday, June 9, 1922 : There was a message from the Chief to-day, through his private secretary, H. G. Price, to the effect that he had had a most interesting journey in Germany, but had suffered a curious illness. He had been very bad, but he could not believe, as some people thought, that he had been poisoned in

Germany. . . . Goudie was suddenly summoned to Paris to-night, thence to follow the Chief to Geneva. What is afoot?

[*Note* : The message referred to was included in the last *communiqué* the Chief ever sent to his staff. A word or two about these *communiqués* may not be out of place here. They were issued almost daily for many years through his secretaries, who usually telephoned them to Carmelite House first thing in the morning. When abroad, the Chief would frequently send *communiqués* by telegraph. They were copied out and circulated to various departments. In his later days he widened their circulation, as he said they were not merely intended for a few people to look at and then stow away from the rest of the staff. Indeed, on one occasion he said he had decided to send a copy daily to Mr. Glover, the commissionaire, with instructions to show it to anyone who cared to see it. It was probably this idea that his *communiqués* were kept too secret that caused him, shortly before the end, to order with that quaint exaggeration that he often used to emphasise an order that they should be posted in a hundred different rooms. How many *communiqués* were issued during his lifetime I do not know, but one in April 1922 bore the legend in his own handwriting, "Carmelite House *Communiqué*, No. 6459." Occasionally they would come in the original—not by telephone—and the typescript would then bear many corrections and quips added in his own

hand. The *communiqués* varied in length. The shortest I remember was five words ; the longest 1700. They ranged over every detail in every department—what his “ferrets” reported ; his instructions on policy in matters both large and small. He would warn us with equal seriousness to “watch” Ireland, or the divorce courts, or the comic animals in our children’s features. He would report things he had heard and seen, and suggest news stories about them ; he would criticise the serial or commend a “Touchstone” verse ; sometimes he would criticise the paper page by page ; he would tell the publishing department how he had watched without their knowledge the publication and distribution of the papers, and demand explanations of faults and delay he had noticed ; he would hit out at “some infernal idiot” in this or that department who had let things go wrong. Very often these *communiqués* were embarrassingly personal, but if at times they blamed, they just as frequently praised. He never lost a chance of commending good work in any department, and his *communiqués* would now and then announce a surprise bonus to this or that individual. He varied the style of his messages. On one occasion he wrote in the form of Pepys, starting, “Up very betimes and abroad by road . . . and did take a brief glance at your broad-sheet before setting forth . . .” and so on.]

Sunday, June 11, 1922 : There is a foreboding

atmosphere about the corridors. "We are on the edge of a volcano," says one man. "What do you know?" says another. There is an order from the Chief (still somewhere on the Continent) to-night that we are to look into the matter of Ronald True's reprieve after a report on his sanity by mental specialists. The Chief, who protested a month ago that certain published articles were calculated to get "this common murderer" off, thinks it is all wrong, and he wants the Home Secretary and Sir Maurice Craig, the great brain specialist, seen. Percy Potter went by car to Littlehampton to see Craig. He got the only reply that could be expected; and Marlowe declined to print any of the strong criticism which the Chief had desired.

Tuesday, June 13, 1922 : There are curious tales going round the clubs, those whispering-galleries of London, about the Chief. Northcliffe had had a "terrific breakdown," or he had "been poisoned," or had "created a row at Evian and insulted Sir Frederick Treves." We on the staff are met everywhere with, "What's this about the Chief?" We know nothing. But to-night we at least learned definitely that the Chief was ill, and that his further article on Germany would not be published, as his doctors had ordered abstention from work.

Thursday, June 15, 1922 : Things rather electrical. Evidently something serious has happened. The directors have taken over control of the business. Nothing about Northcliffe to be published unless signed by

Sir George Sutton. One thing that causes some amusement is the reappearance of several of the "office-relatives" who had been relieved of their jobs in the Chief's campaign. I met one of them in the corridor. "Hullo," said I, "you back?"

"Yes," he grinned. "You look surprised. I'm not so sure I would not have preferred the Chief's order to stand, for they pensioned me off nicely. Now I've got to come back and work for my living again." Seymour Hicks's daily paragraph about the *Man in Dress Clothes* has got the boot, and I don't suppose Hicks is any too sorry. But the biggest bombshell is the announcement that Caird and Fish, two of our directors, have issued writs for libel against Northcliffe, and that they are remaining at their duties. The grounds for the writs are not stated, but it is no secret that they are based on rather violent messages received from the Chief concerning a meeting of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association about wage reductions into which the Chief said he would hold an inquest on his return. Northcliffe often chafes at the activities of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. He is too great an individualist, and some of the steps they have taken in the common interests of all the newspapers he feels restrict his own enterprises. More than once he has threatened to withdraw from the association, saying he was not going to be shackled by his competitors. "Pooling brains is all right" he once said, "but it often looks

like *fooling* brains." . . . Said one man to me to-night, "I'm in a funny position. Just before he went away the Chief said he had increased my salary, but the cashiers have heard nothing."

Friday, June 16, 1922 : Sutton and Goudie have returned—from Switzerland. This morning we publish a statement about the Chief's health which should put a stop to some of the queer, exaggerated stories that are sweeping Fleet Street like wildfire—as was perhaps only natural when no news of his illness was available. There is a great display of affection for the Chief both inside and outside Carmelite House. "We can't work with this hanging over us," said one of the reporters to me. I said our duty was to carry on and turn out the very best paper possible. "But if we only knew the truth . ." he went on appealingly, and I had to say I was just as much in the dark as anyone else. Little groups talked in the corridors. "What about it?" "What do you know?" Charlie Hands came up quietly. "These things have a way of righting themselves," he said. He always had a comforting way.

Saturday, June 17, 1922 : Goudie tells me the Chief is undoubtedly very ill—but things are far less gloomy than rumours make out. He and Wickham Steed took the Chief to Evian. Near relatives have now gone there.

Sunday, June 18, 1922 : The Chief is back in London. Hedged around with the mystery and "hush-hush" that we associate with the illnesses of kings, he arrived

at Victoria Station from France to-night. It was thought to be a secret, but the Exchange Telegraph Company's Paris correspondent sent word of his passing through Paris from Evian on the way to London. I took the message to the Editor. He seemed surprised that the news had got out.

I : I am just going to ask you one question. Don't answer if you do not wish to. What is the matter with the Chief?

The Editor : I will tell you what I *must* tell you. He has got to be kept away from the telephone. You are one of the people he telephones to. If he rings you up—listen to him, don't argue, be happy in your conversation with him, say nothing to worry or annoy him. Agree with all he says. Take down any instructions he gives you. And if anybody asks you for information, as they have been asking me to-night, you can say all the facts were stated in last Friday's paper and there is nothing further to add.

I : I understand.

I went back to my room with a heavy heart. It was as bad as all that, then. I did not want to go home. There was a feeling of anxious expectancy everywhere in the office. Reporters went about with glum faces. Even sub-editors, a much more phlegmatic species, looked up wonderingly at people who entered or left the room. Upstairs the compositors tapped away diligently at their linotypes ; downstairs the machine

hands got ready the giant presses . . . but they tugged at the coat of any editorial man who passed their way and whispered, "What's up with the Chief?" . . .

Yes, the Chief has come back, but not the Chief. The telephones were busy with inquirers. The other papers wanted news. American newspaper correspondents were particularly pressing. But Carmelite House is a Sphinx. . . . I left my room for a little while to talk with the leader writers. When I returned, my deputy said : "Someone rang you up a moment ago."

"Who?" I asked.

"It sounded like the Chief. He said 'Tom,' and when I said you were out of the room he switched off."

So the Chief had tried to get through to me. I did not know whether to feel sorry or glad he had missed me.

I walked along the corridor to the Night Editor's room. Putting my head in at the door, I saw him at the telephone. . . . His face was very white. . . .

Resource has not yet failed the Chief. Although his telephones had been disconnected, he had found a way through. . . . They had forgotten the one in Lady Northcliffe's room.

Monday, June 19, 1922 : Despite efforts to keep him at rest, he has succeeded in telephoning again to-day to one or two people. He speaks in a whisper—a ghostly voice. He says he hears that people say he is mad. "They are watching me." And he wants the best reporter sent down to see him, as he thinks that's a good

story, and a good reporter ought to get the full story.

. . He must be delirious with this terrible illness. It has apparently been decided that after all it is not a good thing to try to keep him off the telephone, as he might take it into his head to get into a cab and come to the office. So his private line, I hear, has been restored to-night, and all calls are to be put through to two people only—Pomeroy Burton or Douglas Crawford.

Tuesday, June 20, 1922 : To-day we announce that Lord Northcliffe has returned from the Continent and has been advised to undergo treatment on account of heart weakness accentuated by ptomaine poisoning. The *Express* this morning hints at a coming election, and the good chances of Lloyd George because of reduced strength of the opposition from a certain quarter.

* * *

Days passed without any further real news. All London talked of the Northcliffe mystery. Rumours came and went. We refused to believe them ; but we had no weapon of fact with which to destroy them. Now the Chief was reported to be sleeping well and getting back to normal ; then he was reported to be worse. We got his obituary notice set up in type ready for emergency. The Editor asked me what I thought of it. " I hope it won't have to be used," I said. " I'm afraid there is no hope," he replied. " It is nearing the end—heart weaker—pulse feeble—temperature high—and the poison still there." " Does he know ? " " I

don't know if he knows anything. He is full of morphia.

.. He is very, very ill to-night." With this shadow over us the work at the office went on quietly, steadily. . .

The paper was as good as ever, despite the insinuations in Fleet Street. The staff realised that hope of the Chief's recovery was almost gone. We went on with our job. We realised that the things Northcliffe had created would go on. They were bigger, less mortal, than the man. We heard he had dictated a note or two in a faltering way to his mother. She was having prayers offered daily in Barnet Parish Church. One evening, the work of the day done, I went with Harold Pemberton (who had shared with me the sunshine of the Chief) to Carlton Gardens. I think we both felt drawn there. A footman told us the Chief was "progressing fairly well." As we came away we glanced at the roof. We saw some new white timber. It was the little wooden hut, hastily erected there, to which the dying Chief had been removed for air and isolation. You could just make out the outlines. It looked strangely out of place. The whole affair was put up in one night. Workmen began at 9 p.m. and by 11 next morning the Chief was in it. I thought as I looked at it : "Were I a priest, what a sermon I might write. Around me the glitter and throbbing life of the West End, gay youth and lovely women off to dances and theatre-parties—the things he so liked us to write about. Away beyond the Embankment lights his great papers being prepared for another day

for their millions of readers. Everything going on as usual. And up there, dying in a hut on a London roof, the creator of those vast enterprises, forgotten by the world before he was dead."

Sunday, July 16, 1922 : Even directors appear in the dark about things. I met Curtis, our Manchester director, to-day. He rather surprised me by asking if I knew really how the Chief was. I told him I knew nothing beyond what I read in the papers. He was much distressed. "I had a great personal affection for the 'Old Man,'" he said. "He took me up when I was a reporter at thirty shillings a week, and all I am I owe to him. He has hit me hard more than once, but I am indebted to him probably more than any man."

July 17 : "Like you," said McLeod, Literary Editor, to-day, "I feel the Chief is on the other side of a wall, cut off from his friends. It's terrible." Spoke to Sutton about this in the corridor. "I know," he said thoughtfully. "I know you are all thinking affectionately of the Chief." Sutton looks worried—this silent man the Chief trusts most, I think—the only "outsider" who has seen him in his illness.

Saturday, July 22, 1922 : Announced to-day that, owing to the illness of Northcliffe, Caird and Fish have withdrawn their writs for libel. Captain Smith, of the *Berengaria* (formerly the *Imperator*), looked in to see me to-night. He wants to know what's all this Northcliffe mystery which is the talk on the Atlantic liners.

Wednesday, July 26, 1922 : Travelled home to-night with my friend J. Hugh Jones, News Editor of the *Daily News*. "It is curious," he said, "how one notices the signs in Fleet Street. They think the absence of Northcliffe is noticeable in his papers." All I could think of to say was, "Don't take your news or opinions from Fleet Street. Journalists are worse gossips than women."

Thursday, July 27, 1922 : The work goes on. In the midst of our anxieties we inaugurated to-night, with all the characteristic "boosting," our first wireless concert from the station we are controlling at the Hague. Big stores like Harrods, Selfridges, Barkers, hotels like the Metropole, wireless equipment shops, and other establishments arranged apparatus for their customers to listen in. There were big crowds at all these places. It was not as big a success as we had hoped for.

Friday, August 4 : People are calling at the office with offers of "certain cures." One woman reader has sent a hair from an elephant's tail, "which is sure to bring good luck." Pomeroy Burton has asked me to get a piece for him. The Chief's family is at Carlton Gardens. Northcliffe has asked that we give a page to his death. We are making it up. It is headed: "DEATH OF VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE: FOUNDER OF THE 'DAILY MAIL.'" It starts, "We deeply regret, etc. . . ." One of the directors said to me to-day: "The doctors say he will die next week. It's a great tragedy—a sad ending without anything dramatic about it."

Monday, August 7, 1922 : Sir Campbell Stuart arrived from New York in *Aquitania* hurriedly. We sat in Room One and talked wistfully of the Chief, swapping stories eagerly of a world we knew was slipping away from us. We've a common bond because we know he liked both of us. "How did *you* come to know him?" I ask. "I was 30," he says. "I had nothing at all. I came from Canada to London with a regiment of Canadian Irish to help recruiting in Ireland. That fired his imagination. We met in London." Later, when Northcliffe went on his American mission, he found Stuart doing diplomatic work for Canada at the British Embassy and bagged him and brought him back to London, where, at 32, he became the Empire's youngest knight. "Titles," the Chief had said, "are only valuable if you get them young. They are no good to you at 60. . . . And always make use of your Christian name as well as your surname. What use are L. George and W. Churchill. They *know*. Initials with names are of no value." Stuart's secret of success with Northcliffe is, I'm sure, his diplomacy, the *poise* the Chief so much envied. Also, Stuart, I know, talked *to* him, not always *with* him.

Sunday, August 13, 1922 : The shadow draws nearer. We have been discussing getting Winston Churchill to write a personal sketch of Northcliffe for an obituary number. Nothing has come of it.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEATH OF "THE CHIEF"

Monday, August 14, 1922 : The Chief died this morning. I heard the news on reaching the office. The directors present called me down to discuss what we were going to put in the paper. I was told we had got to tell the public something about the Chief's illness, and that was a job for his medical attendants. I was asked to go to Carlton Gardens myself and get an official history of the case from Dr. P. Seymour-Price. With a furtive glance at the hut on the roof, I approached the house of death. The Chief had only been dead two hours. I was received by McKenzie, the Chief's financial agent. All was very silent. The few people about seemed to walk on tiptoe. The sudden end had rather taken them by surprise. A moment or two before my arrival, Lady Northcliffe had left the house and had been pounced upon, said McKenzie, by newspaper photographers waiting outside. This had offended her . . . and yet this is one of the forms of pictorial journalism which owes its development here to the Chief. The doctor had left Carlton Gardens, and I had to go on to Sloane Gardens to find him. A friend

THE DOCTOR'S STATEMENT

of Northcliffe, he was much upset. I explained my mission, and he told me to ask him questions. We talked a while, and then he authorised the following statement, which was given to the Press generally under his name :

“ The illness from which Lord Northcliffe suffered was infective or ulcerative endocarditis. It is probable that this fatal disease began insidiously months ago. In fact, it is not improbable that it started during his recent world tour.

“ The trouble made slow progress until some two months ago, when there was a considerable amount of fever, progressive weakness, and the heart was obviously becoming embarrassed. The patient's whole being was poisoned by the germ which was circulating in his blood. His condition steadily became worse.

“ Infective endocarditis is usually fatal. Very few patients recover from it, and in the case of Lord Northcliffe his extremely strenuous life, together with his war work, his world tour, his recent visit to Germany, and the noticeable loss of weight, had done much to undermine his constitution, and had lowered his resistance to such an extent that the germ (*streptococcus*) was able to find its way into the blood-stream.

“ These germs exist ordinarily in the body, but it is easy to understand that, should they find their way into the blood-stream, the condition presents an extremely grave problem.

"This was the situation that faced Lord Northcliffe's medical advisers on his return, obviously very ill, from the Continent. Every treatment known to medical science has been tried, without success.

"With characteristic energy and fortitude, Lord Northcliffe put up a great fight. He was aware of his grave condition, but refused to yield to the enemy. He retained consciousness almost to the end."

As I got up to leave, the doctor said : " You were a friend of his ? " I nodded. " Had you seen him much recently before his illness ? " " I was with him on the Continent for some weeks in April. " " And he seemed in good health ? " " He was much as I had always known him. I noticed nothing at the time that suggested anything wrong. After what has happened, there are little things one remembers. Meaning nothing in the ordinary way to a layman, they might have meant much to a medical man. For instance, he very soon got tired. Once or twice at night he appeared to grow old all at once, and slip off to bed as if a little bewildered. But these were not frequent occurrences. Usually he was bright and chatty, active when he got on to a thing, watching all his newspapers most carefully, and keeping pace with the daily news stream and sending telegraphic instructions and criticisms to London. He did some extraordinary things, but, then, he was a man who was always doing extraordinary things. Had this not happened, there is really nothing I remember on that

THE FUNERAL

Continental trip that would have given me cause for anxiety. The only thing that really impressed me was his frequent reference to his determination to get out of the newspaper game before his powers failed him . . . that he was growing older . . . that, and, in a lesser way, his pride in his reduced weight and his insistence that he was going to get it down still further."

"You knew him well. You would not have known him these last days, so thin. . . . He has altered a great deal, poor fellow. It's better to think of him as you knew him. . . . He put up a great fight this morning. I have seen nothing like it. Then he slowly sank. Poor fellow."

Thursday, August 17, 1922 : To-day we have buried the Chief. A vast crowd in and outside Westminster Abbey, where a service was held. Hannen Swaffer opposite me. I saw he was weeping. What an odd thing that at the very moment when the funeral procession left Westminster Abbey for the cemetery there arrived at Waterloo Station the financier Bevan, the fugitive captured in Vienna through Northcliffe's offer of a reward of 25,000 francs. . . . At the graveside I saw Pine, the Chief's chauffeur. He looked quite bowled over. I thought of the carefulness with which he always drove Northcliffe. "You know why he is careful," I remember the Chief saying to me at Pau. "He knows he will be sacked if there's an accident, whether he's to blame or not. And it's in writing too. It's the only

way . . . but he's the best and most careful driver in the world, and a perfect gentleman." Back at the office to-night, Marlowe talked to me. He has stood out calm and leader-like amid the emotional turmoil of these past weeks. He has got the ship in hand.

* * *

The diary ends.

The bottom had fallen out of my world.

Campbell Stuart resigned from the *Mail* the week after the Chief's death to devote himself to affairs at *The Times*, of which he remained Managing Director till 1924. In that year he added another romantic page to his dashing history—this handsome young bachelor then but 39—by becoming to all intents and purposes the proprietor of Britain's great national organ for a fleeting period. Pending the unravelling of will complications he, as Managing Director, was the "man in possession" with the key to ownership. Whoever found him found *The Times*. Perhaps one day he will tell us the secret history of the comings and goings of those days—of the Walters—the Astors with their millions—Lord Rothermere in the background. Campbell Stuart smiled his way through and by the time he was 40 could sit back with a comfortable fortune and enjoy life.

A few months after Northcliffe's death I parted company with the *Daily Mail*. I went to Australia to join Keith Murdoch on the *Melbourne Herald*. I went

CLOSER TOGETHER—OR GO

there because of the Chief's often-expressed vision of the future of the great overseas Dominions in the Empire scheme. I remembered what he had told me both before and after his last world tour. "Something is going to happen to this Empire of ours in your lifetime, my boy. Fleet Street knows nothing about it. You, my boy, will live to see big events. The Empire has either got to get closer together—or go."

So I went to see for myself. But that is another story.

THE END

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